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**“ *GREAT OCCASIONS* ”**

**THE SPANISH ARMADA**







QUEEN ELIZABETH

*(From the engraving by William Rogers)*

# THE SPANISH ARMADA

BY

LORNA REA

ILLUSTRATED

PETER DAVIES LIMITED

1933



*First Published in October 1933*

Printed in Great Britain for PETER DAVIES LTD. by T. and A. CONSTABLE LTD.  
at the University Press, Edinburgh

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## CHAPTER I

‘To be a King, and wear a crown, is a thing more glorious to them that see it, than it is pleasant to them that bear it.’

ELIZABETH—‘The Golden Speech.’

### I

ON the nineteenth day of May in the year 1588 a sombre king knelt in the Escorial and prayed to the strange God of his belief whose services he was accustomed to solicit and command.

He prayed for his lovely ships : for the ten galleons and two large pinnaces of Portugal, the galleons of the Indian Guard, the four ships and two pinnaces of the Flota of New Spain ; for his armed merchantmen, his galleasses, and his great hulks, numbering in all one hundred and twenty-seven craft fully manned and provisioned, for they had lain their last night in Lisbon Harbour, and must now sail out in all their strength and beauty.

On that morning when his Armada, bearing its cargo of twenty-seven thousand souls in the care of a hundred and eighty friars, was

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slowly drawing out from its familiar shores, the soul and mind and body of Philip of Spain kneeling at his devotions were concentrated with purest resolute intensity on victory for his Spanish ships, and defeat, accompanied by humiliation for the jocose red-headed Queen of England.

In London and all along the coast of England great business was afoot.

The Admirals in Plymouth were stamping with impatience and vexation at the manifold delays, the orders and counter-orders imposed on them by the wary Council in London headed by their hesitant Queen.

Elizabeth was buzzing like an angry bee ; coping with the multiple detail of land defence, and naval equipment and tactics. She had disturbing letters to read from her Lord Admiral, who must needs at the last moment beg for money ' whereby Her Majesty's navy may be the better furnished and thereby more able to do her and this realme service.' She had letters to write and instructions to issue which must combine economy and caution with a due recognition of the frightful issues about to be engaged upon. And, doubtless, from time to time, as part of her routine activities, she, too, prayed for victory to her God whose eyes, she felt assured, could rest only favourably and with kindness on her

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good brave little country and her brilliant seamen.

Majesty must be served ; but whose ?

Defeat, in that month of May, must have seemed to both countries a quite intolerable thing to contemplate. To Philip it would mean an agony of loss, a too sudden downward swoop from the pinnacle of power that was Spain's by right of conquest, and, as well, a personal pain too searing to be borne.

To Elizabeth, whose maternal passion embraced every inch of the land that was hers, and every man, woman and child on it, and whose Tudor pride was of a temper neither to bend nor break, defeat would be no mere political disaster, but a savage hacking and hewing at the fibres of her being.

Nevertheless defeat must surely come within the next few months either to the austere King whose pawns were princes and dukes, priests, fanatics, soldiers and slaves, or to the sanguine Queen who was so admirably served by English gentlemen and seamen.

## II

The name Elizabeth Tudor rings a clash of bells in the brain and provokes too rich a tumult of thought.

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In this year of 1933 there are people who hold in loving reverence the memory of Queen Victoria. There are others who recoil resentfully from all that she stood for, and crown her with rude adhesive epithets instead of the awful majesty to which she was accustomed.

To those latter she was but a smug old woman in a funny bonnet ; plain, dumpy, stupidly arrogant and narrow-minded ; a bully, a matriarch.

To these others who loved her, it seems that she prisoned in her small body the spirit of an England as great as it has ever been, and that she was fitly followed by five Kings to her grave. But already the mists both of prejudice and of sentiment are clearing away, and it is almost possible to see the real Victoria against the thick welter of change and events that formed her background ; almost possible to assess at their true worth the courage and enterprise and vitality of her age that puts to shame the exhausted caution of our own times, and compares so well with the age of that other more startling Queen born four hundred years ago.

Unlike Victoria, Elizabeth will never emerge quite clearly from her gaudy trappings.

She cannot be to us what she was to her people : to the great men near her throne, and the poor tradesmen, peasantry, beggars

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and the like who felt the impact of her will and the warmth of her benevolence.

We know her faults. We judge of her personal integrity and find it erratic. We see her wayward hand in the flurry of indecision that preceded her Council's most important activities. We see where she was false ; a liar, an opportunist, a cheat. A shrew, too, capable of mean cruelty, baiting the men who served her faithfully, and giving free rein to her flaring ill-temper. We apply to her the methods of modern psychology as though she were a person, an individual woman whose actions were recorded, and whose motives and characteristics can be deduced from them and analysed.

This is an amusing pastime, but its results are without significance or value.

Elizabeth was not a person ; not a human being answerable to God only for her private failures and treacheries ; not a woman living her own life and free to make her soul and cultivate her garden of virtues.

She was Elizabeth of England. She *was* England, as her father was before her and no man or woman has been since. When she came to the throne in 1558, her slight body—so unlike her ample father's and her pretty mother's—was destined to be the instrument which would determine the future of her



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country. When she died in 1603, she had so increased and ripened the power that was her heritage that she had woven around her small figure the pattern of England's greatness.

Useless, then, for us to think of her as a woman. Her tempo was not the tempo of her woman's nature. She knew the value of that too; she used the wiles and trickery considered proper to her sex, but they formed but one small facet of her nature. She was built to endure great stresses, to move with a larger movement than that of an individual, to carry on her shoulders the weight not of a single life—her own—but of the four million lives of her subjects.

She must be judged by us not as a woman, not as a romantic heroine which she completely failed to be, but as a system.

To her people, who once were quick and have long been dead, and yet whose dust seems vital still, she was that simple and moving thing, a Queen.

There can be ecstasy in service. A man's love for his ruler, comprising as it does a homage, a loyalty that permeates his every cell, may be far beyond anything he will accord an equal.

When the ruler is a woman, that love, that passionate devotion is very deeply intensified and there is added to it a new element

of protective responsibility. No woman who in open competition has wrested from men and other women some position of first importance can ever command this particular devotion. It would never be given to a woman President. But a Queen, ruler only by right of that fantastic accident, birth, has sacrificed no sexual advantage in arriving at her supreme position. Her armoury is stocked with every weapon. Even her lonely and dignified isolation is an asset: it will draw sympathy and love from her most reluctant subject and set ablaze the hearts of those others to whom chivalry is not a mere word but the secret bread that nourishes them.

The men who surrounded Elizabeth criticised her as we do; were chafed by her despotic strength and irritated by her weakness. Cold, practical Burghley sighed over her impulsiveness. Drake resented the prudence she imposed on him. Howard was made wretched by thoughts of his ill-fed, ill-paid sailors. Essex hated her at times for the curb she put upon his insolence. But to them all she was that gracious and glamorous thing—their Sovereign; and to them all she was what she should not be to us—a woman: Gloriana.

It was she who drove her seamen out in their small vessels on ridiculous expeditions which somehow lost their absurdity and turned

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into triumphs. It was she whose peremptory wraith stood at the elbow of scholars and creators speeding their quills over their pages. It was she who made her shopkeepers diligent, shrewd and far-sighted. It was in her service that golden lads were happy to die, and golden girls wept angrily because their lovers had another fiercer passion.

Shrew, liar, foolish woman, according to her critics now ; but then, Queen of her England, as her enemy was King of his Spain.

### III

When the Emperor Charles V came home in 1541 from the wars that were his incessant preoccupation, he found his son Philip a quiet biddable boy of fourteen ; intelligent, apt, conscientious as to detail, but fully capable of apprehending wide schemes.

In a few years of intensive personal coaching Charles made the boy master of all the art and craft of ruling that he himself had acquired by years of experience, practice, trial and error, as the greatest Emperor in Europe.

‘Be cautious,’ urged Charles. ‘Trust no man, for no man is trustworthy ; and a woman far less. Make no friends. Princes and kings can have no friends. Listen to the advice of men of opposite factions but take

counsel from neither. Use your own judgment and make your own decisions.'

Philip was a docile son. He acquired these habits of wariness and distrust required of him and supervised everything himself, not delegating even trivial details to his subordinates. He learned, too, to trust neither man nor woman, although such was his quiet charm that each of his four successive wives found him lovable.

'There should be ceremony at our Court,' said Charles. 'Pageantry and pomp are our proper background. We must stand alone, far above these great men who are our servants.'

So Philip, who was shy, maladroit, and naturally austere, obediently took part in impressive tourneys at which he did not shine, attended banquets which bored him, and forced upon his court a ceremonial richness which became it very well, but which he found most wearisome.

'Remember your greatness. You are Spain. You will be the richest and most powerful prince in Christendom, and nobody must stand against you.' As Charles repeated this, the root of his belief, the proud boy readily absorbed it, so that later it seemed to him that the world was indeed his footstool, and that he was God's instrument on earth ; His right-

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hand man, invested with power to reward the virtuous and to punish the evil-doers.

As his father Charles fell pathetically under the dominance of his hereditary melancholy abstraction, more and more power slipped into young Philip's hands, until in 1555, when Charles formally abdicated, the name of Philip of Spain resounded throughout Europe, and the eyes of foreign courts were all turned towards the young monarch who glowed like a dark jewel in a marvellous costly setting.

The Netherlands were his ; he was King of Spain, Emperor of Vienna, Duke in Milan, Naples and Dijon, Count-Regent in Brussels, and King-Consort of England. As this last he was presumed to have such influence that he might ultimately make England an appendage of Spain. The fact of the Jesuit movement having started in Spain—first as a mere cult among educated persons, but quickly acquiring immense political importance—gave him a very powerful weapon and ally in the Holy Inquisition. Finally, he was colossally rich, not only territorially but substantially, since the treasures of the half-explored New World were in his hands.

In his own country he was popular as well as powerful. His father had been at heart a Fleming, a beer-drinker, more at home with the pursy burghers of Flanders whose treasure

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was not of the soul or spirit, but at the bottom of their well-plumped pockets, than with the passionate Spaniards whose bodies, fed by swift-flowing acrid blood, were alien to his robustly male physique.

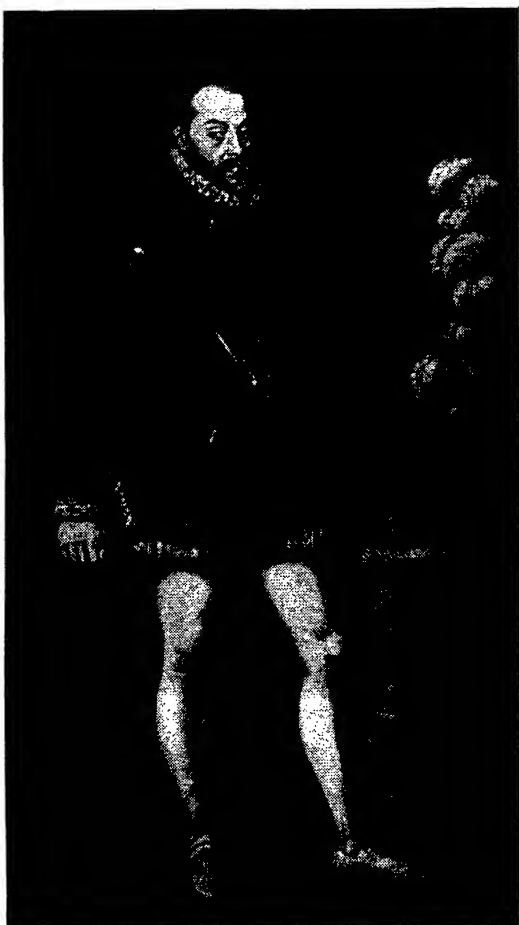
Philip belonged to Spain. His movements were economical of effort ; he was slight, with veiled eyes. He had the pungent vinegar quality of his race, and that strange earthiness of the Latin that so often fuses with a subtle mystical fervour in matters of religion.

He never developed a great belly like his father's, nor had he any of his father's zest and heartiness. Only they shared the same corrosive melancholy.

It was aesthetically right that Philip's shining dawn should be denied fulfilment. He was in the tragic mould.

### IV

Thirty years of personal, religious and political complications led up to the War of the Spanish Armada, and during all these years war seemed imminent (and was inevitable) except on the recurrent occasions when Elizabeth, to the anguish of her people, seemed to be toying with the idea of a Spanish marriage and the consequent alliance of these two most antipathetic countries.



PHILIP II OF SPAIN

*(From the portrait attributed to Sofonisba Angiusciola,  
in the National Portrait Gallery)*

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In the beginning, on that chilly early morning of November 17th, 1558, when Mary died and young Elizabeth inherited a throne and a sulky, disintegrated kingdom, it looked as if she must turn for help to her late half-sister's husband, a man well-skilled in the rules of governing and an all-powerful prince. England was a bone between two dogs, and France was all ready to snap her jaws on such a tasty morsel, so it was only natural to suppose that given the right of choice the victim would prefer to fall to Spain whose intentions at least were decently masked. It seemed inevitable that the unformed Queen, whose girlhood had in no way fitted her for her position, should be prepared to accept Philip's help and guidance, and the policy that would obtain in England would be a policy imposed by Spain.

Poor Mary Tudor—to whose agonies the heart goes out—had started Spain's work by all these ugly persecutions ; these burnings and tortures that have made her name a synonym for bigotry and intolerance. It only remained for Elizabeth to carry on her work, more temperately perhaps, but on the same lines ; and the Ambassador, Count de Feria, rubbed his hands at the sight of this green girl faced by teasing problems, and felt confident that the ambition and projects of his master would soon be nicely furthered.



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Elizabeth, who never cared for shock tactics, nevertheless employed them once, when the green girl, with no transition period, no rehearsal, no obvious make-up or straining after effect, stepped boldly on to the European stage quite competent to play her rôle of diplomat and ruler.

Her task, as she conceived it, was to cherish her England, the child that was hers ; to give it no doubtful stepfather, but so to cosset and nourish it that it should grow to man's estate.

For years her every action was protective of her country that under Mary had been so sick and sorry.

Even at the start she would yield nothing to Spain. But she would not oppose Philip too openly. Her child was not ready to fight. There would be time enough for that later on when all was put to rights and set in order.

Calmly, in defiance of all expectation, she outlined a Church Settlement, and, with comparatively little persecution of her sister's beloved Roman Catholics, she contrived to build up a sturdy and well-founded Protestant Church that stank in the nostrils of His Most Catholic Majesty. But she still spoke fair words to his Ambassador, and drove him to distraction with her equivocal docility.

She fostered commerce by such legitimate

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means as giving new Charters to the Merchant Adventurers, forming and financing new companies, and instigating Navigation Acts for the protection of English mariners. Less legitimately, perhaps, she enraged Spain by countenancing secretly the piracy that Drake and Hawkins indulged in so successfully ; but it was easy enough to disavow officially all part in their escapades and to offer an apology on their behalf.

From the first moment of her accession she followed her own ideas in building up and consolidating the prosperity of her nation, but although these ideas were in direct opposition to every desire of Philip's she managed to stave off war till she had secured a long enough breathing space and was ready.

She evaded him, accepted his presents, listened to the suggestions made by a whole series of politely furious Spanish Ambassadors, and started in Europe a new game of chance turning on the hazard of her matrimonial intentions *vis-à-vis* Philip and all these other princes who sometimes sought her hand, and who were sometimes—when the occasion required their friendship—delicately informed of her accessibility and complaisance.

Her august ministers, turned bawds for diplomacy's dear sake, effectively held in play as possible husbands all her potential enemies,

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and meanwhile Elizabeth's child was growing to a formidable stature.

Philip, whose hopes had been dashed when Elizabeth made her *début* with a Church Settlement in her pocket, had much cause to regret the kindness he had showed her in 1555 when he had intervened on her behalf with his wife Mary. Then she had been only a tiresome young half-sister at Woodstock, whose dull life and plain attire had so dimmed her red-gold hair, taken the sparkle out of her blue eye, and obscured her wit and grace, that she seemed but a quiet little princess.

Now she was become an obstinate and dangerous woman.

Perhaps, suggested de Feria, a strong husband might effect some good results. So Philip entered the marriage lists with a sigh, cognisant of the necessity of sacrificing his personal inclinations to his political advantage, but regretting it.

Friendship with England was important to him, since if the Channel were closed to him he was denied access to his richest possession : the Netherlands. He had hoped that his friendship would be even more important to England, but since it seemed that the Queen was independent and self-sufficient, he must resign himself to making an offer for her hand.

This was the first movement in the long

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and complex dance which Elizabeth and Philip performed over a period of years. It was a dance which involved advances and retirements, coquettish interludes and intricate convolutions. It was danced to a tune that lilted surface-sweetly, but the roll of drums grumbled beneath.

For over twenty years Elizabeth trod her impertinent measure. For over twenty years Philip followed.

He had only one way of ending this relationship : by war ; and his hands were too full to allow him to indulge his passionate desire for it.

His seeming strength, these vast and scattered territories that he governed, were in fact a weakness. His dissipated energies and resources undermined his policy.

There was the Mediterranean to guard against the encroaching Turks, whose intrusions were not stopped until he crushed them at Lepanto.

There were internal troubles in Spain.

There was the menace of Mary, Queen of Scots. All the plots centring round her were said to be backed by Spanish gold, and indeed many of the Spanish Ambassadors were implicated in them, but Philip did not dare to contemplate what would result from the death or deposition of Elizabeth and the substi-

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tution of Mary with her French connections. An Anglo-French alliance would have suited him ill.

More vexatious, more worrying than all, the unruly Netherlands refused to be quenched even under the hideous rigours of the Duke of Parma, whom Philip sent to trample them down. Again and again trouble broke out, and Philip could not turn his attention to a war with England which would cut off his communications with Parma and would destroy all hopes of subjugating these stubborn rebels.

The dance accordingly pursued its course. Now and again Elizabeth fronted Philip with a gracious curtsy while, behind her back, her hand slipped money into the pockets of these rebellious Netherlanders, who were thus enabled to flout their overlord again. Now and again, nose in the air, she stepped aside to languish prettily at France; but then policy would dictate to her, as it dictated to him, that it was dangerous to go too far: war was a costly game.

For all these twenty years Philip slaved in the service of his great kingdom, and at the back of his mind his slow anger burned against Elizabeth whose brilliant trickery, combined with the favourable accidents of circumstance, successfully staved him off.

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Not till 1585, when it was apparent that he really meant to attack her, being at last too greatly provoked ; not till she knew that his conception of a huge enterprise against England was being put into effect, did she end the false measure.

Even then she would not openly attack this old familiar enemy, but instead simply unleashed her sea-dogs, whose ferocity she knew would send them ranging forth for a satisfying nip and bite at Philip's hated ankles.

## CHAPTER II

‘The winds and waves are always on the side of the ablest navigator.’

GIBBON—*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

### I

PHILIP’S passion against England, that had been glowing all this time, was brought up to white heat by Drake’s fantastically bold, simple and successful exploits in the years 1586 and 1587.

In 1585 excited gossip in every court of Western Europe hummed round the preparations that Spain was making on a colossal scale against England. In every exchange it was known that Philip was raising huge loans, and the vastness of the enterprise seemed like a warrant of its success.

It was as if the legendary sea-serpent were making ready its huge coils against a shoal of upstart minnows. This time the dragon must surely crush St. George.

But this was the time when England, defying tradition, was ready to send against her enemies no St. George in shining armour but

one Francis Drake, gentleman of the sea, to the King of Spain 'a fearful man' and to the Spanish people 'El Draque,' The Dragon, a name that turned the bones to water and set the stout heart fluttering.

With gusto and delight Drake made his plans.

So Spain was arming to come out into the open ; at last he and all his friends, who were itching to be at the throats of these sallow foreigners, were free to tilt against the forces of His Sacred Majesty. They were making their mammoth preparations, were they ? Well, England should get a blow in first, if he had any say in the matter, and, by God, he would see to it that he had.

So ran the thoughts of England's most skilful and happy-hearted Admiral in these early months of 1585 when he was chafing to be let loose in the Spanish Indies, to stick a barbed arrow or two in the hinder parts of Spain, and throw a random banderillo whose flames might lightly singe His Majesty's black beard.

To annoy and vex and puzzle the Spanish command, to tempt their vessels into the open sea and then square up to them with an absolute arrogance that royalty might have envied, to loot the enemy treasure ships and bring home to lay at his mistress's feet, as a



dog might lay a bone, their amazing content of gold, silver bars, and uncut emeralds. These were the rough and pleasurable designs that filled the foreground of Drake's mind.

Behind them, under all his apparent inconsequence and carelessness, his shrewd brain informed him that an enemy who has been harried before the war has formally begun, loses confidence, and is delayed and flurried. Conversely, these small successes that have undermined his morale, must build up in the men who inflict them a comfortable poise, an assurance of further victories; and this, Drake knew, would be of value in the great contest that could not now be long delayed.

They were not new, these schemes. For years, just such provocative sallies had been countered by the molestation and arrest of English seamen.

The Spaniards who sailed the seas went in terror of these English buccaneers, who would drive their wretched little vessels into Spanish and Portuguese harbours all over the world, attack galleons three times their size, seize all they could get, burn and destroy, and take themselves off again, heartily rejoicing.

Later, Elizabeth would graciously accept a handful of diamonds, or a pleasant quantity of bullion, and would blandly play the old game of condoning and protecting her unruly

pirates, while she diplomatically dissociated herself from their enterprises. No wonder at all that the Spaniards who stayed at home, burning fat candles to substantiate their passionate appeal for the safe return of the Indian fleet, would seize upon any chance of capturing some over-confident English vessel, and would delightedly hand over their prisoners to the Holy Office.

This, in its turn, would send such gales of fury blowing through England, where the thought of the Inquisition roused a most violent and bloody hatred, that more reprisals followed—and so the game went on.

But now in 1585 it had taken on a sterner aspect.

However unconcerned the ordinary Englishman might feel, however confident—and rightly confident—were all these men of Devon and the South Counties who felt the sea in their blood, nevertheless the future held a menace.

Philip was enormously powerful and enormously rich, and his fleet, after the fine victory of Lepanto when under the direction of the Marquis Santa Cruz, the Cross had routed the Sickle, had easily sustained the reputation of invincibility. And now in 1585 the dockyards all over Spain were furiously active, adding to that fine fleet, equipping it with



SIR FRANCIS DRAKE  
*(From an anonymous portrait)*

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new artillery, strengthening it by every possible means.

It seemed as if the odds were heavily in favour of Spain. It seemed as if the red-headed foxy Queen, who had established herself as the most significant figure in a period rich in great personages, was now to meet her match, and see her system overthrown, and the close-knit fabric of her small country torn to shreds and tatters.

A different spirit in consequence informed Drake's projects in that year. Still light-hearted, still equipped with his special endearing quality of easy friendliness, he was moved by a more serious purpose, and these months of waiting about on land all through that spring when brain and heart were solely directed towards the sea, were a fierce test of his loyalty; but though the Queen felt his impatient tugging at the leash she would let him off in her own good time and no one else's, and for months she continued mentally to hop from one foot to the other in a fury of indecision.

Ultimately a small typical incident occurred—the treacherous seizure of a fleet of English corn-ships—that stirred up a blaze of sudden anger, and Drake, whose hopes had grown sluggish now, was ordered to requisition a fleet for an expedition officially intended to

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procure the release of the corn-ships but with the *sub rosa* purpose of attacking the Spanish Indies.

Drake hastened to Plymouth and proceeded to organise an expedition that was particularly suited to the temper of England at that moment. It was animated by a keen desire for vengeance, always a strong motive when roused at all in the breasts of a normally good-tempered people, and there was about it that irresistible tang of recklessness and brilliance that Drake bore with him.

On September 14th, 1585, he received his sailing orders, and terrified lest the Queen's generous disregard of her usual prudent economies should prove to be a mere momentary impulse, he immediately hustled his fleet out to sea, as buoyant, as wilful and gay as a staid Admiral can be, and swelled his lungs with the commodious breeze that meant for him and his men freedom and adventure.

The conduct of the expedition was oddly compounded of a shrewd appreciation of strategic moves and a spirit of haphazard unconventionality.

Drake made his own opportunities and used them to the best advantage. At times he insulted his enemies, the Governor of some great town or island, for instance, treating him with a silky insolence reinforced by an upward

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twist of his aggressive half-hooped eyebrows. Then he would cock his hat at its most rakish angle and sail away chuckling behind his neat beard. At other times he slaughtered men and plundered and burned towns. He took Santiago and Porto Praya, San Domingo the seat of Government for the Spanish Colonies, and Cartagena the most difficult town of all. It seems as if some of his actions were inspired by mere caprice, or irritability and boredom, or perhaps by a desire to exercise his subtle strategies against heavily fortified and wary enemy towns. But it is certain that when he sailed his fleet home in July 1586 he had inflicted great material damage to Spain's possessions, had done an even greater hurt to Spain's prestige, and had effectively delayed the preparations for the Great Enterprise; for what country could settle to shipbuilding and equipment with an apparently ubiquitous enemy at large among her dearest possessions?

Philip was become not only bankrupt but a laughing-stock, and Drake had made of himself a horrid legend to the Spaniards.

His news-value all over Europe was immense, and rumours blew about his name more wildly inaccurate, more thrillingly provocative than the headlines of the twentieth-century press could evolve.

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But his own résumé of his exploits was simple : ‘ There is now a very great gap opened very little to the liking of the King of Spain,’ and he followed up this modest comment with an immediate request for further sailing orders.

They were not forthcoming. The Queen was busy and he could not get a hearing. Drake was anxious to repeat the expedition, not only because the whole violent bent of his nature was towards activity, but also because he considered calmly and in cold blood that it lay in his power so to harass and cripple the Spanish command that the Great Enterprise might be indefinitely staved off. Elizabeth was always prepared to sacrifice the foresighted and visionary projects of her counsellors to the temporary convenience of the bulk of her subjects, so she dallied and temporised. This bustling governess, whose school was all England, was busily engaged in looking after her children, but was always as mindful of the gulf that yawned between her and her noblest subjects, as if indeed Burghley were but the Head Prefect of her School, and Drake, perhaps, a successful and popular Captain of Games. She had no time for cranks, no time for considering the peculiarities of individuals. The school timetable was very full and she lived politically

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from hand to mouth, convinced that the best way to ensure a happy future was by looking after the immediate present, which that summer was dominated by the discovery of the Babington Plot, of which the object was painfully simple : to remove Elizabeth from the Throne and substitute Mary, Queen of Scots. The Queen was fussed and worried, as indeed any ruler would have been who was called upon to deal out judgment on that wayward and lovely storm-centre. Elizabeth was very womanly in many ways, and in none more than this :—that worry acted instantly both upon her temper and her power of decision, making the first extremely uncertain, and causing the latter to waver more frenziedly than usual.

So it was not until the spring of 1587 that Drake obtained his licence to sail again. His instructions were satisfactorily explicit and at the same time admirably vague, and he carried them out to the full. He was to ‘prevent and withstand such enterprises as might be attempted against Her Highness Realm or Dominions,’ and he was particularly directed ‘to distress the ships within the havens themselves.’

In the *Elizabeth Bonaventure*, with a small fleet of twenty-three sail, he sailed into the harbour of Cadiz, which was full of shipping



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and where much of the preparation for the Great Enterprise was being made. His appearance caused such a riotous scrambling panic that he was able to inflict a material injury estimated at about one hundred and seventy-two thousand ducats, and to obtain valuable information about the Armada.

His next movement—as magnificent as it was rash—was against Cape St. Vincent. This rocky promontory seemed untakeable, but there is this about these lunatic brave schemes that they carry their good luck with them, and Drake took it, thereby paralysing all communications between Lisbon, the headquarters of the Armada and the important Southern ports.

At this point a slight mutiny flared up incited by Vice-Admiral Sir William Borough, who had so pettishly remonstrated with his superior earlier in the voyage that Drake had held him under arrest on his ship the *Lion*.

The quarrel was discreditable to both. Borough was a sailor of proven worth who nevertheless protested with injudicious passion against the recklessness of Drake; and yet that recklessness was fully justified by its success.

The explanation of their mutual dislike probably lies in the fact that the average man has no stomach for genius; he fears it and

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resents it, and hates the small significant touches that betray its existence. So now Borough seized an opportunity that occurred and sailed the *Lion* home.

Drake's anger was black and bitter. He pronounced sentence of death on Borough, the chief officer, and all the mutineers. Meanwhile the *Lion* with its condemned crew slipped over the horizon.

Drake turned his attention to the more pressing matters in hand. The men were so worn out and restless, they had been so long at sea, had taken part in such exhausting engagements—though with admirable results—that they now felt they merited a spell at home. But Drake was a persuasive leader, golden-tongued when he pleased to be, and he now induced nine ships to hold on with him to the Azores.

On June 18th they came up with the *San Felipe*, and without difficulty took the biggest prize ever seen and never yet imagined.

She was the King's own East Indiaman.

Her dazzling cargo was of bullion and jewels, gold chains, crystals, uncut stones, tons of spice and ambergris, huge chests of china and raw silk and velvet, bales of lawn starched and unstarched, sarsenet, calico carpets and pieces of taffeta and coloured buckram.

She seemed a dream, a myth. Aladdin's

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cave was not more rich. At last it seemed fitting to Drake to sail for England. At last with this huge prize in tow he would take home his weary and dilapidated fleet.

On June 26th he dropped anchor in Plymouth Sound, tasting with relish the sweet summer air, but all agog, after a brief respite ashore, to return to the strange unfriendly seas where his triumphs had made him the most talked of man in Europe.

### II

The summer months and the early autumn of that year—1587—were savagely exasperating to Drake and to Philip. Both were engaged against intangible enemies. Drake had ascertained the magnitude of Philip's preparations, had been deeply impressed by them, and had come home confident that his warnings would meet with Elizabeth's sympathetic attention, and that she would let him loose again with more money and more ships to destroy the colossal embryo before it came to birth.

He was quickly disillusioned, and discovered that in spite of his recent successes he was out of favour. Elizabeth loved peace with all her heart, and persuading herself that it might be

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maintained at least a little longer, she officially disowned her part in the expedition to Cadiz and blandly refused even to mobilise the fleet. Then, too, the Council refused to ratify the sentence of death that Drake had passed on Borough, and piqued and surprised, he raged bitterly against Burghley, whom he held responsible. Possibly he was right to do so, for Burghley's prudent modesty certainly winced distastefully away from the touch of braggadocio that was part of the Admiral's charm.

Elizabeth had some excuse for her excess of caution. If the fleet were mobilised the commerce of England would be dislocated, if not actually paralysed, and she very wisely loved and sheltered this business of buying and selling, exporting and importing, that makes for solid prosperity. The men, too, if they were kept out at sea in their unhygienic vessels were struck down by all sorts of epidemics, including typhus, and became, instead of valuable assets, expensive liabilities. Besides, as she impatiently reassured herself and her counsellors, it was extremely unlikely that the Armada would be able to sail that season, and if by any chance it did, England, she was proudly certain, could be ready in a fortnight to meet and defeat it.

So her leading Admiral, much loved, much

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feared, experienced for a time the chill discomfort of his sovereign's disregard and the irritation of the Council's inattentiveness to his repeated warnings.

Philip, meanwhile, who had been sanguine for a moment when the Indies fleet came safely home, was facing with dogged courage one disappointment after another.

The Armada was intended to sail in September. Men were working day and night in the shipyards of Cantabrico and the river of Sevilla. New filipotes and small barks were ordered to be constructed for the transport of horses and artillery, and the orders were carried out with such haste that 'one would not believe that they could have been built by human hands.'

Leyva was in command of the fleet in the absence of the Marquis Santa Cruz, who, with a special flying squadron formed for that sole purpose, was sweeping the seas in search of that unaccountable corsair Drake, now snug in Plymouth Harbour. The ignorant impetuosity of General Leyva marched well with Philip's blind persistence, and he fed the King on groundless hopes.

In July the Andalucian and the Neapolitan divisions were ready for sea. In early August Oquendo sailed his squadron round from Lisbon to Passages. It seemed possible to

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Philip that at last his great intention would bear fruit.

But Santa Cruz did not return until late September, and then his vessels were foul and battered and in need of thorough overhauling. October was a month of agony for Philip and his chief Admiral. The fleet was largely concentrated now at Lisbon, which sounded good to Philip, but the ships were in such poor shape as to cause acute anxiety to Santa Cruz.

He visualised the stormy seas and fogs of the wintry Atlantic, and knew that his ships could not endure them. He pointed out to Philip the atrocious danger to his diffusely sprawling Empire if the Armada were destroyed. With wisdom and foresight and commonsense he summed up the situation as it really was and begged Philip to wait till March. Philip at last consented, with bitterness, and by December it was known that the Armada would not sail until spring.

So Elizabeth's dalliance was so far justified by the event, and she had safely postponed for five months the expensive business of mobilisation, which she did not proceed to carry out fully until December.

It was then effected so vigorously and with such ease, owing to the brilliant reorganisation of the Navy by the Peace Commission of 1583, that on December 15th Lord Howard of

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Effingham received his instructions, on the 21st his commission was signed, and on December 22nd he wrote to Burghley: 'I hope that within two or three days all things will be in a readiness. Here is a very sufficient and able company of sailors as ever were seen.'

From that moment the curve of England's fortune bore upwards; erratically, with delays and miscalculations here and there, but always on the up-grade, so that spirits rose and confidence and courage swelled the hearts of the seamen whose job it soon would be to defend England.

On December 23rd, Drake, who had gradually regained the Queen's favour, was given a commission ideally suited both to his abilities and his desires. He was to organise a small independent fleet of thirty sail which would act as a flying squadron under his sole command. He was invested with unusual powers, being allowed to order the seaports to mobilise and concentrate whenever and wherever he thought good. He was to be unhampered and free to act on his own responsibility in a way that is almost inconceivable now, when the complicated activities of our huge Naval machine depend on the absolute cohesion that can be obtained only by rapid modern methods of communication.

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Whether or no such centralisation and cohesion will end by destroying that most valuable possession of the individual—his willingness to accept responsibility—remains to be proved. Certainly the freedom of action that was given at moments to Drake, and that at other moments he simply took for himself, and that he in his turn expected his immediate subordinates to enjoy, produced as magnificent a race of fighting seamen as can be imagined.

Drake, who freakishly combined sagacity with bravado, himself made few tactical errors, but where mistakes did occur they were remedied by a recklessness that took no account of adverse odds. The captains and junior officers were more than obedient cogs in a smoothly revolving wheel: they were individuals whose business was to decide, each man for himself, how best to serve his ship in the service of his country.

Drake exultantly leapt to assume this burden of responsibility, and by January 3rd was down at Plymouth and had hoisted his Admiral's flag. Rumour, as always, was busy with his name. Was he off on a new expedition to the Indies? Was he about to launch another attack against the cringing Spaniards, who believed now that he was a magician with power to bind and loose the



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winds, for how else could a heretic so prevail against Christians? The Pope, even, slyly applauded his prowess, and while men flocked to Plymouth to join him, Philip paced up and down his apartment in the Escorial searching for some way to frustrate this hateful enemy whose movements he could never anticipate, since they defied all rules and all conventions.

Only a few days later, however, Elizabeth veered towards her old loves, economy and peace, and ordered the fleet to rest at Queenborough with the crews reduced to half-war strength, which would bring the monthly charges down to a sum of £6141, the rate of pay being then 30s. per man per month.

Howard was disappointed. He regretted the dispersal of good men. He himself was to rest at Queenborough with the bulk of the fleet, while Sir Henry Palmer with the *Antelope* and eight other sail patrolled the narrow seas, and Drake and his squadron remained at Plymouth.

Queenborough, as a station, did not attract Howard, but he was perfectly confident of the safety of these reductions and acquiesced in the Queen's purely defensive policy.

Not so Drake. His fine squadron was ready manned and provisioned, including the *Hope*, the *Nonpareil*, the *Advice*, the *Aid*, the *Swiftsure*, and the *Revenge*. He had seized five hulks

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from Sweden on January 20th, and learned from their commanders that preparations for the Armada were going forward. He wrote straightway to the Queen, urging the dangers of delay and begging for sailing orders, but they were refused because his letter crossed with news from Henry of Navarre that sickness and desertion had so undermined the strength of the Armada that it must surely be dissolved.

Both these reports were true.

The Spanish sailors were sick and starving, and numbers of them daily stole away, while others refused to enlist against the monster 'El Draque,' whose personal prowess was so feared that at one point a rumour of his death was spread by the Spanish authorities who hoped thereby to encourage volunteers. But Philip was incapable now, whatever happened, of abandoning his project. It had become a lunatic obsession. Wrapt in visions and dreams, solaced for all present ills by the thought of a future in which England would be an appendage of Spain's magnificence, and Elizabeth and all her stubborn brood would bow their heads beneath the Catholic rod, he was savagely impatient of the means required to attain that end, and had but one thought for his Armada : to strengthen it and get it out to sea. He gave orders for a new squadron

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of twelve galleys, and added to the Armada the galleons of the Indian Guard ; and the spur of his insistence most cruelly rowelled Santa Cruz, who desperately saw to it that in spite of every obstacle preparations should continue. In the shipyards of Spain the ragged swarthy seamen were held at their tasks, repairing, loading and provisioning. In Plymouth, Hawkins, who had a private contract with the Government for keeping the ships up to standard efficiency, instigated a night-shift, and the work of scraping and tallowing was carried on by the light of flaring cressets.

Still Drake's sailing orders did not come, and now he was in a fever to be off. He knew that the perfidious minister Crofts was constantly dropping a little poison into Elizabeth's ear, persuading her that it would be to her financial advantage to withdraw her support from Drake, proceed against him for piracy, and having made restitution to the King of Spain, appropriate to her own use what surplus remained. Elizabeth was greedy and capable of treachery, but she knew men, and she liked and trusted Drake, so Crofts' counsel went unheeded. But during these anxious weeks of strain when Drake considered it imperative to be off and there seemed little likelihood of obtaining the necessary per-

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mission, there are indications that he was engaged with Essex in planning a desperate secret venture. A letter exists showing their dangerous association. It hints that their plan was to steal off without orders and deal a blow for England, though it meant disobeying England's Queen. Drake at this moment was passionate and exalted and showed an almost fanatic belief in the justice of England's cause, and the desirability of striking first. It would have been perfectly in character for him to display just that fearless disregard of authority and personal safety, and it seems probable that some such brilliant piece of insubordination would have been carried out. But in the middle of February the situation changed.

Santa Cruz, harried and worn out by unjust accusations, died, and the master whom he had served well realised at last that he had great occasion to mourn his loss.

Elizabeth was delighted. It was just as she had expected. God was evidently prepared to intervene on her behalf. Still, it would be wrong for her to neglect her business and rely entirely on the Almighty, so she very shrewdly sent Howard with nine great ships and Palmer with his squadron to make a demonstration in front of Flushing where the Peace Commission was sitting. It pleased her

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jovial sense of humour thus to parade her readiness for war while talking sweetly of peace.

Drake was ordered definitely not to leave the coast, and thus was tragically lost a heaven-sent opportunity for the destruction of the Armada before it left its own shores ; for by the death of Santa Cruz all had been thrown into confusion.

The Duke of Medina Sidonia, chosen not for his competence nor his maritime experience but for his name and lineage as one of the *Flor de la Nobleza de España*, was sent to take the place of Santa Cruz.

The work had been so hurried, and had been carried out under such difficulties, that it had progressed all unevenly. The ships were there, concentrated in Lisbon, and some had been overhauled, but there was little ammunition, guns had been hastily tumbled into the wrong ships, food was shockingly scarce ; even the water butts were rotten.

Had Drake with his trim squadron appeared at that moment there would have been nothing to stand against him. But although that particular chance was blindly missed, the curve of Spain's fortune was declining, and at the same time the keenness and confidence of the English Navy was superbly consolidated.

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On February 29th, Howard, who was no fire-eater, wrote this to Burghley : ' I have heard wonders of the Spanish Army and that upon pain of death every man must be ready to cut sail the 25th of March, and that their coming is for England. If I may have the four great ships . . . I doubt not but to make her Majesty a good account of anything that shall be done by the Spanish forces and I will make him wish his galleys at home again.'

Hawkins, a very different type of man, was equally clear and calm. ' We have to choose,' he wrote, ' either a dishonourable and uncertain peace, or to put on virtuous and valiant minds to make a way through,' and it was obvious that the choice was already made.

Old Sir William Winter at the same time wrote to his fellow officers from the *Vanguard* : ' Our ships doth show themselves like gallants here. I assure you it will do a man's heart good to behold them ; and would to God the Prince of Parma were upon the seas with all his forces and we in the view of them ; then I doubt not but that you should hear that we would make his enterprise very unpleasant to him. But with sorrow I speak it, I am afraid that they will keep me from the baths of Bath by their long detraction where I meant to have been to seek health by the beginning of May next.'

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Three and a half centuries ago Sir William missed his cure at Bath ; three and a half centuries have passed since these words were written, but as one reads one must feel a movement of friendship towards the veteran who wrote them, who saw his ships as fine as gallants, and longed to put them to their proper use against the enemy and then hurry home to cure his gout, rheumatism, or whatever ailment troubled him with the gentle waters of Bath in early May.

That the tenacity and courage of the English fleet were recognised abroad, too, is clear from the letter that the Venetian Ambassador wrote from Madrid to the Doge, saying : ‘ The battle will in any case be very bloody for the English never yield, and though they be put to flight they ever return athirst for revenge to renew the attack so long as they have breath of life.’ But no foreign country in that spring of 1588 appreciated the confident poise and assurance that pervaded the English Navy, or understood the reason for it.

Late in March Drake was ordered to re-organise his command. The plan of campaign that had been drawn up at a formal council meeting on February 15th was to be made effective. It was a plan without foresight, without any recognition of the new

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strategic principles that had been crowding into Drake's brain for the last few years, dimly at first, then more clearly, and finally with an absolute lucid apprehension of their potential value.

The old plan was to split the fleet into three sections, an Eastern squadron to guard the Narrow Seas, a Western to lurk off Ireland and towards Spain, and a third under Drake to make a belated and valueless sally on Portugal in support of the claims of Don Antonio against Philip. But Drake the man of action was also a thinker, and his cool smooth-working intellect, divorced from his passion of hatred against Spain and his natural predispositions towards valorous deeds, had arrived at a whole set of new conclusions regarding naval warfare. In a superb despatch sent to Elizabeth on March 30th he adumbrates for the first time these modern principles of strategy which Nelson later brought to their finest flower. He understood what no man before had had the wit to see : that no invasion is possible unless the invading force has absolute command of the seas. He felt himself capable of preventing Spain from even temporarily gaining this command, and his simple plan, so unlike the muddled medieval conception of defence and cross-raiding as the basis of naval tactics,



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was to fall upon the Spanish Armada at its point of departure with the whole available English fleet.

This revolutionary scheme, with its attendant necessity of leaving the shores of England uncovered and defenceless, was far in advance of what even the most perceptive spirits of his day could grasp. In England and abroad the legend of Drake's prowess was founded on his courage, his audacity and his improbable good luck. This legend militated against the acceptance of his new schemes, which seemed but a further expansion of these attributions which men delighted in or feared according to their nationality. It was impossible to believe that his plan of attack was really the result of a brilliant intellectual calculation in which no movement of the man's hot swift blood was involved.

Elizabeth modified her schemes but would not accept his. Emotions ran high. Drake's squadron was now as trim and *soigné* as a man could desire, and more pleasing to the eyes of Drake and Hawkins than a bevy of complaisant court beauties. The crews had been weeded out and only picked men kept, and out of his own pocket he had for some months supplemented their scanty store of victuals so that the reserves could be kept intact.

Elizabeth may not have starved her seamen

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as she has been accused of doing, but she certainly did not err on the side of pampering them, and she was directly responsible for the irritating policy of only victualling the ships from month to month by which the impetuosity of her admirals was curbed and their freedom of action too much hindered.

At last, stirred by the sight of his lovely squadron so finely groomed and gallant lying useless in the harbour, Drake sat down and wrote a personal letter to the Queen which was graceful and appealing and deftly played upon her heart strings.

‘Most renowned Prince, I beseech you to pardon my boldness in the discharge of my conscience, being burdened to signify unto your Highness the imminent dangers that in my simple opinion do hang over us : that if a good peace for your Majesty be not forthwith concluded—which I as much as any man desireth—then these great preparations of the Spaniard may be speedily prevented as much as in your Majesty lieth, by sending your forces to encounter them. Somewhat far off and more near to their own coasts, which will be the better cheap for your Majesty and people and much the dearer for the enemy.’

The Queen sent for him to come to Court. A last happy look at his squadron so con-

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firmed him in his resolution and lent such magic to his tongue that he carried Elizabeth with him, and though the Council still doubted of his wisdom, the Queen imposed upon them a more progressive policy.

On May 10th money for stores was issued ; all ships victualled for six months were ordered to attach themselves to the Lord Admiral's flag and proceed with him to Plymouth to join Drake. More important than all, Howard was empowered to employ the fleet as he thought best, and Drake did not doubt for a moment that when he got Howard to himself, away from all these safety-mongers in London, he could prevail upon him to up anchor and away. Howard, Lord Admiral of the Fleet, was a brave and courteous gentleman, but Drake was the first seaman in the world, and though he would have phrased his title more modestly he knew very well what he stood for, and counted on his influence over his actual superior in office.

On May 23rd Lord Howard was signalled off Plymouth.

The moment was heavy with drama. These men of Plymouth loved Drake. They looked on him as a god, supremely inspiring and supremely authoritative. For months he had driven them, sweated them, and ruthlessly expelled the weaker brethren from their midst ;

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they knew the scorn that could flash from his full-lidded eyes and twist his full-lipped mouth. They knew that the custom of the times demanded at the head of the fleet no commoner, however outrageously brilliant his achievement, but the scion of some old noble house. Don Alonso Peres de Gusman, the good Duke of Medina Sidonia, Earl of Niobla, Marquis of Cacaca in Africa, Lord of the City of St. Luccars, must be more fitly matched than by Sir Francis Drake, Knight and Admiral.

But would that same Knight and Admiral suffer gladly—or suffer at all—the usurpation of his office by a man more gently born, but without one half his own ability? Howard pondered this too, and nervously paced his deck. True, it was a great thing for Francis Drake that the Queen had appointed him her Vice-Admiral; any man's heart might well be gladdened by such a title. But would it gladden Drake's? And if not—if he refused to stomach second place—if he preferred to lose his head in order to keep his pride expensively intact—what could be done then? Without him, England was but a cripple, that the Spanish Juggernaut would crush and grind into the dust. A nasty morning for Howard of Effingham sailing steadily down Channel with the Royal Standard flying from

his flagship, the *Ark*, and beside it the Vice-Admiral's flag intended for Drake. An awkward morning indeed. The womb of the immediate future was big with a teasing problem. It might resolve discreetly or alternatively produce some ugly monster. But a pleasant steady breeze was speeding the fleet along and the *Ark*, with sails well filled, would wait for no man's pleasure and no man's fears, and at eight o'clock that morning, Howard and his fleet in battle array drew near to Plymouth.

Sir Francis Drake, till then Admiral on that station, sailed out from port to meet him. In front were his pinnaces and small craft disciplined into lines, yet bobbing with buoyant grace. Behind, in equal ranks, three vessels deep, came his grave and lovely squadron, with the Admiral's flag flying above him as he stood on the deck of the *Revenge*. The two fleets, flawlessly handled, drew near. The salute was given and returned, the noise of the guns reinforced by drums and trumpets and the shouts and cheers of men. By now the opposing lines were near together, and Drake made his magnificent gesture of formal acquiescence. He lowered his Admiral's flag, and presently accepted from a pinnacle sent off by Howard that of Vice-Admiral which the Queen by special Royal Commission had

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accorded him. It was the action of a very great man whose personal ambition was all wiped out by his immense restraint and his natural dignity.

Howard, unfortunately, in the following year, when the conduct of the campaign was taken out of his hands, suffered a spasm of jealousy, during which time he wrote his narrative of the campaign of 1588 and had it translated by the Florentine historian Ubaldino. In this relation he most ungenerously treats of Drake's part in it, and instead of according to him either the credit that was his due, or the dignity of his position as Vice-Admiral appointed by the Queen, he merely makes casual mention of this junction of the fleets, and adds : ' Whereupon His Lordship commanding that fleet with his own, made Sir Francis Drake his Vice-Admiral.'

It was this petty treachery which caused Drake to approach Ubaldino and incite him to write a second version, which is impartial and accurate, and infinitely more valuable than the first account. It is disappointing that after such a fair beginning the honourable carriage of the two Admirals should have dwindled into malice and spite.

Neither Howard nor Drake was a hero of fiction. They were men of high ambition, most jealous of their private honour, and only



LORD HOWARD OF EFFINGHAM

*(From the engraving by Thomas Cockson)*

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Drake's rigorous and disciplined devotion to England had made it possible for him in the first place to quash the turbulence and rebellion in his heart.

But certainly in these early days nothing smirched their integrity as joint servants of the Queen, and at the beginning of June Howard wrote to Walsingham : ' I must not omit to let you know how lovingly and kindly Sir Francis Drake beareth himself and also how dutifully to Her Majesty's service, and unto me, being in the place I am.'

### III

Four days before that charming naval ceremony took place at Plymouth, an even more portentous ceremony was taking place in Lisbon Harbour on board the ships of the Spanish Armada.

On Sunday, May 19th, the Duke of Medina Sidonia escorted round his fleet the Prince Cardinal Vivey of Portugal, son of Maximilian and Doña Maria, the sister of His Majesty.

It was the Cardinal's privilege to conduct prayers on every ship and publish war with fire and blood against that Jezebel who still clung in seeming security to the country that



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had been awarded to Philip, with some slight lack of humour, by Pope Sixtus V.

The gravity of the occasion was enhanced by the emphasis that King, Cardinal and Admiral, each in his turn, laid on the holiness of the cause for which the fleet was going out to fight. No spurt of patriotism was to be relied on here, as in England. There had been no hearty rallying to the flag of a popular Admiral. Indeed, on that last day before they sailed, the Captains, aghast at their failure to replace those men who had died or deserted, forcibly pressed into service all foreigners who could be picked up haphazard in Lisbon, and even opened the prisons and selected captive criminals to bring up their crews to full strength.

The jocund spirit of the Devonshire mariners had no parallel along the coasts of Spain.

Instead was a fierce insistence on the religious aspect of the war ; and a bitterness more extreme than that between Christian and infidel was fostered between Roman Catholic and Protestant.

Naturally the Spanish and Italian mariners had their hearty humours, grumbled at their food, were ribald in their cups, and at departure kissed their women according to their wont : some jolly, some half-savage ; with sickening fear rolling in the pit of their

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stomachs. But the spirit that seeped down to them from above, through Cardinal and subordinate priests, was born of a fanatic belief that King Philip was the Lord's Anointed with a special mandate to perform His will upon the person of that vile wanton, Elizabeth of England.

All true Catholics, therefore, who girded up their loins and went about this holy business must needs earn Heaven if they died in the attempt, but would certainly earn a painful death at home in Spain if they failed to carry out orders or showed cowardice or treachery. A bribe and a threat together : the soft word spoken, but the whip still clenched in the hand : these were the stimuli provided by authority.

Not long before the day came to sail, a Jesuit priest at Madrid confessed two persons each of whom protested independently that he had seen a vision ; a most encouraging vision—the kind of vision that all through the ages Generals, on the eve of battle, have been delighted to communicate to their troops. It was this : the Armada of Spain was clearly seen engaged in terrific battle with another huge Armada. But on the Spanish decks great angels had alighted, spreading their wings protectively to shelter the beloved defenders of the faith.

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That the story was shabbily discredited a little later on, mattered not a jot. Sidonia, with a very natural cynicism, probably merely hoped when he heard it that it would last long enough to serve his purpose, and promptly spread about the news of the welcome angelic intervention that was going to take place in the hour of the Armada's need.

This child of Philip's brain, this huge Leviathan that owed its existence to him and to him alone, had been a very different affair at its conception. Circumstances had altered the original plan, and the frequently recurring proofs of England's able seamanship had in the end convinced Philip of the necessity of greatly increasing his original estimate of the force required to gain the mastery of the Channel, to establish a liaison with Parma in the Netherlands, and in combination with his soldiers invade England, and make that triumphal descent on London for which a large number of banners was provided. (Rather movingly provided, when one thinks to what extent the vision fell short of the reality.)

Santa Cruz, who all along shared with his master the keenest desire to attack England and show the world, which was beginning to forget Lepanto, that Spain was still ruler of the seas, nevertheless differed from him in his

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estimate of numbers and equipment. He knew that Philip, in spite of his attention to detail, had eyes and thoughts only for the ultimate issue and was prepared to hazard it by a too impulsive start. With wisdom and courage Santa Cruz advised delay and more careful and elaborate preparations. With a lack of generosity, due rather to the blindness of obsession than to any defect in his character, Philip accused his faithful Admiral of faint-heartedness. But he did at least follow Santa Cruz's advice and order more vessels to be got ready.

When Santa Cruz, worn out with work and worry, died in harness in the month of February, and his place was filled by Medina Sidonia, there might indeed have been some ground for these accusations. Sidonia was inadequate for the task even if he had cared for it, and it was current gossip that he had no liking for the job. If he could have refused it he would, but Philip was insistent on his acceptance of what was after all a position of the first importance. Sidonia had, too, in Philip's eyes this further qualification: that what he lacked in experience he made up for in gentleness of disposition, which would enable him very easily to take second place to the fierce Duke of Parma. Santa Cruz, whose birth and experience both fitted him

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ideally for the position, would not have found it easy to work hand in hand with so violent and aggressive a colleague.

Downcast and full of forebodings, Sidonia sent reports to Philip that all was in confusion and the ships lacking in everything : arms, anchors, powder and ball, food, and—more important than all—men. Even as late as April it was considered unlikely that the Armada would be able to sail, but day by day Philip planned and calculated and directed affairs, overcoming obstacles, cutting a knot here, evading a difficulty there, and night after long night turned with a sigh from his prayers to his desk.

By the middle of May the results of his pertinacity were seen in the fine assembly of vessels that Cardinal Vivey was called upon to bless.

The fleet—not called by the Spaniards the ‘Invincible Armada,’ but the ‘Grande Armada Felicisima’—consisted of one hundred and thirty vessels well and scientifically organised, although the separate vessels showed grave defects, some being leaky, some overmasted, and a few quite unseaworthy.

The squadron of Portugal, consisting of ten royal galleons and two large fighting pinnaces, was commanded by Sidonia himself in such close association with the squadron of

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Castille, consisting of ten galleons of the Indian Guard and four ships of the Flota of New Spain, with two pinnaces, that Don Diego Flores de Valdez, who was in command of the latter, sailed on Sidonia's flagship the *San Martin*.

These galleons, which were high-charged, with poops and forecastles rising up tier above tier, certainly had a moral value in conveying 'majesty and terror to the enemy.'

This division, with four Neapolitan galleasses and four Lisbon galleys, represented the Royal Naval element and formed the fighting nucleus. It was supported by forty armed merchantmen in four squadrons of equal number: the *Biscayan*, under Don Juan de Recalde, the *Andalucian* under Don Pedro de Valdez, the *Guiposcoan* under Don Miguel de Oquendo, and the *Levant* under Don Martin de Bertendona. All these men were fine seamen with records of excellent service. Oquendo, 'who handled his ship like a light horseman,' had distinguished himself at Terceira; Recalde was Spain's finest seaman; Bertendona was a man of wide experience, and Don Pedro de Valdez had a more established reputation than his kinsman Don Diego. But Don Diego, who was known to be a difficult man, jealous and unreliable, had somehow cast a glamour over his most recent exploits, and it was he who was made Captain

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of the fleet, with orders to advise Sidonia on all points of strategy and navigation. It was on his shoulders, therefore, that the ultimate responsibility rested.

Besides these capital ships and their attendant pinnaces, there was a light division of twenty-two small-oared craft, under Hurtado de Mendoza, and a division of twenty-three hulks for transport and for hospital purposes of a rough and unhygienic nature.

The fleet was armed with two thousand five hundred pieces of ordnance, and the human cargo was made up of some nineteen thousand soldiers and eighty thousand sailors, besides certain great nobles and their train of servants, whose presence on board, though occasionally an embarrassment, was considered a necessary contribution to the splendour of the company.

This small clique included Antonio Luis de Leyva, Prince of Ascoli, an illegitimate son of Philip and dearly loved by him, so that there were those who said later that he mourned the Prince's death as deeply as the loss of the Armada itself. The Count de Fuendas and the Count de Paredes were also on board, and twenty-five knights of the second order, sons and brothers of earls and marquises.

There sailed, besides, that sinister man

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Don Martin Alarcon, Vicar-General of the Holy Office, well supplied with the familiar instruments used by the Inquisition, including—so runs the gossip of the day—a ship-load of whips to stripe the backs of English women, and another of branding-irons to sear the foreheads of all refractory persons with the badge of slavery.

It was idle for Pope Sixtus V to issue a Bull asserting suavely that Spain would in no way oppress England; that King Philip would only appropriate peacefully to his own use the country that was rightly his. The delicate implication that all that was about to happen would pain Philip more than Elizabeth was blankly given the lie by these whips and thumbscrews, the horrid toys of fanatic Jesuits; and also by the fact that the Bull offered plenary absolution to the man who would assassinate the Queen of England. These rather erratic attempts to draw a velvet glove over a large iron hand were pure nonsense. The intentions of this great Armada existing at a cost of thirty thousand ducats a day, and necessitating a daily issue of twenty-two thousand rations to Spaniards alone, were perfectly clear. Philip's orders, given to the Duke of Medina Sidonia and transmitted to the fleet from the galleon *San Martin* on which he sailed, were explicit.



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The fleet was to proceed to Cape Finisterre ; from there to a point south of the Scilly Islands ; and from there to St. Michael's Mount's Bay. Any ship that was detached through storm or accident from the body of the fleet was to make for one of these rendezvous, and there join up with the rest or await them. Any Captain who, for no matter what reason, sailed his ship home again to Spain, would be put to death. At the earliest possible moment the Duke of Medina Sidonia was to get in touch with the Duke of Parma, Philip's representative in the Netherlands, arrange when and where to effect a junction with his troops, and having done so attack, and defeat the English fleet and land on English ground. And so, in the odour of sanctity, blessed by a Prince Cardinal, prayed for in every smallest Church, and burdened with the weight of Philip's hopes, the great Armada, on May 19th, streamed slowly out of Lisbon Harbour.

The opposing fleet that lay at Plymouth—Howard's squadron and Drake's now welded into one—was less spectacular but more nearly perfect ; less elegant but better equipped.

The difference in size between the Spanish galleons and the English has been too much emphasised, partly owing to the fact that tonnage was differently assessed in Spain and England.

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The largest Spanish ship the *Regazona*, belonging to the Levant squadron, was 1249 tons, and the largest English ship the *Triumph* was given variously as 1000 or 1100 tons. Allowing for the different methods of reckoning by which the English always arrived at a smaller result, these vessels were probably of an equality. The English galleons were definitely of a lower type, lying snugly along the water, and those vessels which had been built after 1569, during the period of Hawkins' sound administration as treasurer of the Navy, all showed the emergence of a new type of 'race-ship' from the old 'lofty-built' pattern. It was the Spanish who said 'Grande navio grande fatiga,' but it was the English who first realised that the lesser ships could carry as useful an amount of ordnance, since with the amazing increase of mobility due to their trimmer lines the smaller galleon could turn her broadsides twice, while the greater, awkwardly manœuvring her bulk, could fire them off but once.

At this present moment sheer necessity has induced a new adaptation of this principle by Germany. The size of new men-of-war having been limited by the Treaty of Versailles 'to 10,000 tons,' a new type of 'pocket battleship' is in process of evolution, which compensates for its inadequacy as a floating platform for

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huge guns by adding some ten knots to its speed, and thereby rendering more effective the smaller guns that it carries.

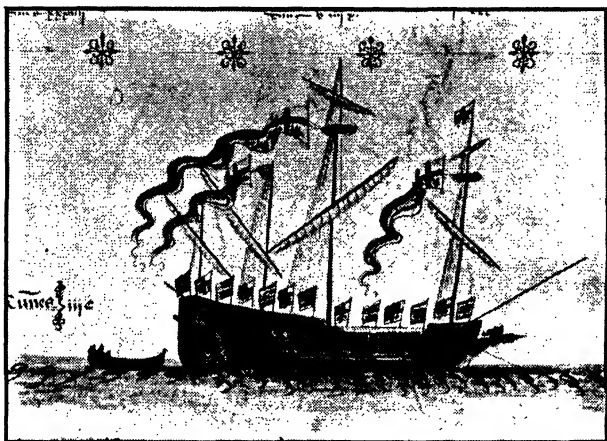
The new ships were of different designs, but all showed the same characteristic decrease of height. The *Swiftsure* and the *Dreadnought*, sister ships, though with a discrepancy in their tonnage that betrays the inaccuracy of sixteenth-century shipwrights, were built on these new lines in 1573. In the same year followed the bark *Achates*, and a year later the *Revenge*, of a size and type that Drake warmly approved, 'being low and snug in the water like a galleasse.'

Meanwhile some of Henry's old galleasses were rebuilt on swifter lines, and galleys and very large ships decreased steadily in popularity; the former because in bad weather they were abominably difficult to handle, the latter because they were expensive to man and maintain.

The fleet that lay at Plymouth in 1588 was the result of this forward movement. Not only was the pattern of the new ships different, but they showed, besides, various improvements. Movable top-masts, longer cables, capstans and chain-pumps were all, according to Raleigh, introduced in his time, and, more important than these, innovations in rigging, including the introduction of the bowline.

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The Royal Navy was represented by eighteen galleons and great ships, of which only two, the *White Bear* and the *Triumph* under Martin Frobisher, were over 1000 tons. The *Ark*, Howard's flagship, and the *Victory*, Hawkins' rear-flagship, were of 800 tons,



SIXTEENTH-CENTURY SHIP

(From 'Anthony's Roll')

but the *Revenge*, which Drake chose because he loved her, was only 500 tons, and the *Swiftsure*, *Swallow*, *Elizabeth Bonaventure*, *Golden Lion*, *Nonpareil* under Thomas Fenner, and all these other famous and richly-christened ships were of a size which is now inconsiderable in a sailing-yacht kept for pleasure alone.

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Seven small private men-of-war lent to the Queen, including the *White Lion* under Lord Charles Howard, formed the second division ; and the third was composed of private vessels chartered and requisitioned, including the London squadron (seventeen ships and three pinnaces), Drake's squadron (twenty ships and thirteen pinnaces), and Howard's squadron (eight ships and twelve pinnaces).

This fleet, under Lord Howard as Admiral, Sir Francis Drake as Vice-Admiral and Captain John Hawkins as Rear-Admiral, was manned by something approaching ten thousand men, of whom the Venetian Ambassador at Madrid wrote in April : ' The Englishmen are of a different quality from the Spaniard, bearing a name above all the West for being expert and enterprising in all maritime affairs and the finest fighters upon the sea.'

The fleet, like the Armada, carried some twenty-five thousand guns, but with this important difference : that many more of them were cannon, probably sixty-pounders, and demi-cannon, thirty-pounders ; whereas the Spaniards were supplied with very many small pieces : four-, six- and nine-pounders called respectively minions, sakers and demi-culverins.

Comparing the *Triumph*, the largest class of

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English ship with the *Nuestra Señora del Rosario*, which was captured by Drake and sent into Torbay, the difference strikes home.

The English ship carried forty-four guns to the Spaniards forty-one, but the English total was made up of four cannon, three demi-cannon, seventeen culverins (18-pounders), eight demi-culverins, six sakers, and only six minions. The *Nuestra Señora del Rosario* on the other hand possessed no cannon, three demi-cannon, six cannon-Pedro (24-pounders), four culverins, one Basilisco (15-pounders), one demi-culverin, six sakers, and as many as twenty minions.

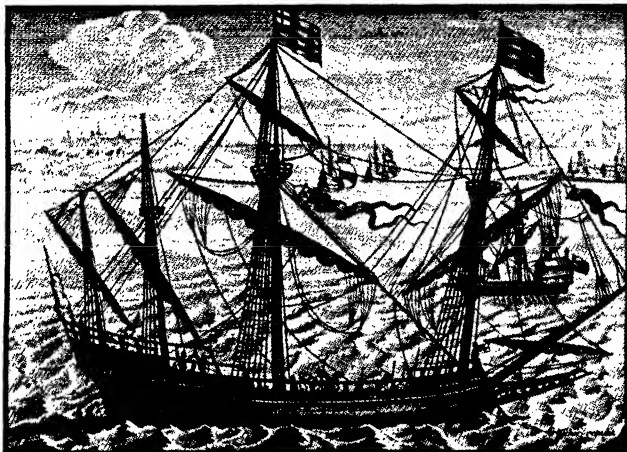
For the most part plain iron round-shot was used, but stone balls, chain-shot and small iron-framed holding stones and bullets were also carried.

It was due to Drake's and to Hawkins' modern administration that the smaller ordnance which was useful only for hand-to-hand fighting had been diminished and the big batteries steadily increased.

The four Neapolitan galleasses, which were considered the most dangerous vessels in the Armada, carried thirty-one battery guns and twenty secondary pieces; and as regards ordnance were not nearly on an equality with the Queen's thirty-six-gun galleons, the *Antelope*, the *Dreadnought*, the *Swiftsure* and

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others. In the galleon class, therefore, England was superior in armament ; and probably, too, just as superior in the auxiliary divisions, though it is difficult to arrive at a just estimate.



ELIZABETHAN SHIP

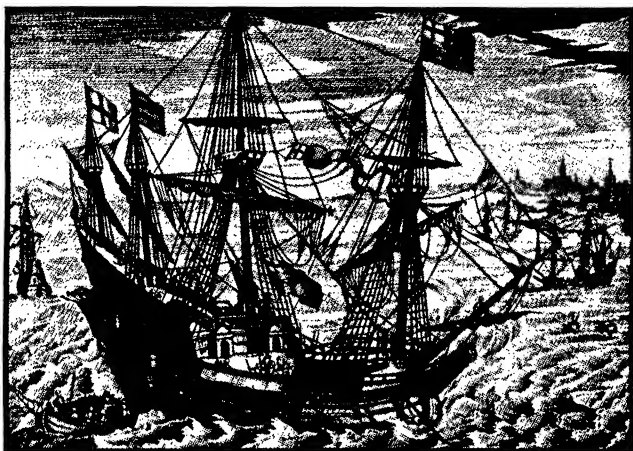
*(From the engraving by Visscher)*

The English gunners, too, had been infinitely better trained in the working of their guns and were far superior to the Spaniards, although gunnery was even then such a specialised branch of warfare that the supply of gunners was always inadequate, and Raleigh says that in 1588 forty-gun ships were fought

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with only twenty gunners, though properly each piece should have had four gunners allotted to it.

There was no standardised uniform throughout the fleet, but odd issues of armour were



ELIZABETHAN SHIP

*(From the engraving by Visscher)*

occasionally given out by the Government, and the men, particularly the gunners, made it their prudent habit to strip off the harness of fallen enemies and use both their body armour and their head-dresses. Many wore quilted cotton short coats to protect them from enemy missiles. Others preferred leather



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jacks with the material soaked beforehand to increase its resistance. The mariners of the Royal Navy for the most part were gaily clothed in the Tudor colours of bright green and white, whereas the men of the Cinque Ports wore white cotton tunics with a red cross in front, and under it the arms of the town 'halfe-lyon half-shippe,' and each great nobleman was free to dress his servitors in his own livery. The armour of the Spaniards was far superior to that of the English in strength and beauty. They particularly favoured fluted breastplates with a stream-line down the front to deflect the bullets.

Great men went into battle as gaily dressed as for a Palace rout, in white camlet or satin, with silk stockings, fine ruffs and gold lace under their shining armour. Their pointed beards were trim; their conical helmets beautifully chased. As they stood on deck they looked too sumptuous for active service, but they fought none the less well for their rich apparel.

When Howard had sailed west to join Drake he left behind him—to blockade Flanders and cut the Duke of Parma off from Spain—a fine squadron under Lord Henry Seymour, his nephew, assisted by Vice-Admiral Sir Henry Palmer and Rear-Admiral Sir William Winter, who must by now have

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reconciled himself to forgoing his cure at Bath.

The squadron consisted of seventeen ships of the Royal Navy, and twelve ships and eleven small craft furnished—in obedience to orders—by the coastal towns.

England as well as Spain had her dignity to consider, and although for the most part a spirit of practical commonsense obtained throughout the fleet, Lord Admiral Howard could not resist making a fine gesture, and so allotted to his nephew one of the best modern galleons, the *Rainbow*, and to Sir William Winter the *Vanguard*, two fine ships which should not have been detached from the fighting fleet even to satisfy the pride of their well-born captains.

At Plymouth, however, in spite of the absence of these notable ships, lay the fine fleet that was the result of the junction of Howard and Drake.

The temper of the men was good. ‘There is here the gallantest company of Captains, soldiers and mariners that I think was ever seen in England,’ wrote Drake to Burghley. The ships were point-device. Hawkins, in spite of the slanders that stuck to his name, had done his work well.

Drake had converted Howard—as he had all along intended to do—and convinced him

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of the necessity of taking an immediate offensive. Howard's Council of War very naturally subscribed to this, since Drake was at its head, and with him were Hawkins, Frobisher and Thomas Fenner, who could be relied upon to support him if necessary against their more decorative if less experienced colleagues, Lord Thomas Howard, Lord Sheffield and that distinguished soldier Sir Roger Williams.

Every ship flew the English flag, at that time the plain St. George's, a red cross on a white ground, and Plymouth Harbour was alive with colour and the lovely movement of ships tugging at their anchors in a boisterous wind on that fine Whitsunday morning, the 26th of May, when Howard and Drake went off to Church together 'to give the rest a politic and Christian example by receiving the Sacrament together in friendly sort.'

### IV

The Church of Plymouth that morning might well be quivering with the passionate hopes and vibrant confidence of the English Admirals, but there were still two impalpable enemies to conquer before they could meet the invading foreigners fleet to fleet. The first was the character of their Queen : her

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blind refusal to face facts, and her tenacious womanly adherence to forlorn hopes of a last-minute peace, or at least to the nice economical and sporadic type of warfare that had been going on for so long. The second was the wind which remains ungovernable by man. The former was certainly the more infuriating, since there is always the possibility of neutralising or persuading a human antagonism, whereas the enmity of the wind was a mere incalculable accident that compelled acquiescence.

How deeply Howard had become imbued with Drake's principles, and how bitterly he chafed at the flaws in the Queen's administration, leaps from the pages of his letters written from the *Ark*, where he lay in Plymouth waiting with the rest of the fleet for the victualing ships which had been promised but which did not come.

All day a watch was kept, and anxious eyes strained out to sea for the ships bringing meat and bread to men who needed them.

'It were pity,' Howard wrote with bitterness, 'that they should lack meat when they are so desirous to spend their lives in Her Majesty's service.'

But it was more than a pity. It was tragic, for this lack of stores allied with the contrary winds, three times frustrated the attempts of

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the English fleet to follow out Drake's plan of campaign and attack the Armada on its own coast, when it would surely have been defeated.

The Armada that sailed so proudly out of Lisbon fell speedily on evil times. The ships got away so badly that by June 9th they were still not clear of the coast and yet were already short of water, and had realised with dismay that much of the food was bad and might as well be thrown overboard.

The Duke of Medina Sidonia, flurried and upset, decided to put back into Corunna to refit and revictual, but he omitted to inform the fleet of his intention, and only those ships which saw him put about, followed the *San Martin*. A large number of others, stragglers and odd ships detached from the main body of the fleet, bore steadily on towards the Channel.

It was understandable that Philip when he heard this ugly news should rage at the inefficiency of the Admiral's staff-work.

'The fault for the Spanish Armada having suffered damage in a storm at sea lies at the door of General Medina Sidonia. . . . Although His Majesty of Spain was already suffering greatly from gout, his pains redoubled when he heard news how greatly the Spanish Armada had suffered in the storm,

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and how it was somewhat hindered in its operations.' Ill, in pain, with anxiety eating through his every fibre, Philip shut himself in the Escorial, 'giving no audiences as is His Majesty's custom when he has important matters to consider.'

The first night in Corunna a gale blew up and wrought such damage that Sidonia in an appealing letter to Philip, protesting that all he had done and all he advised was from love of His Majesty, urged the postponement of the expedition.

Philip was patient but implacable. The expedition must go on. The Armada must linger in Corunna no longer than was necessary to refurbish and refit, and must then take the first opportunity to cut sail. The time necessary proved to be four weeks, and during all that time the Armada lay disorganised and helpless, the peccable element among the crews deserting in great batches, and the others having but little stomach for a fight in this enclosed space. For four weeks a squadron under 'El Draque' boldly entering the port would have caused such a squealing pandemonium and could have wrought such terrific destruction that the end of the enterprise would have followed on the heels of its beginning.

But Drake and his squadron were not forth-

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coming. Certainly on May 30th the fleet had put out from Plymouth, but had run straight into southerly and south-westerly gales, and after ineffectually battling with them had put back into the Sound on June 6th.

The ships bringing stores had still not arrived, and Howard's tact and loyalty were near the breaking-point. But he had that knack of keeping the peace and making no enemies which Drake so notably lacked, and he continued still to write his patient courteous letters to Walsingham and the Council, praising his men although becoming more and more deeply incensed at the delay in sending stores.

By June 13th he was wrought to a pitch of exasperation that in a lesser man, or a man of more spirited temper, would have found vent in violent complaints. Of the one enemy—the wind—he wrote : ‘ Here is such weather as never was seen at this time of year.’ Of the other—the Queen's faulty administration—he wrote : ‘ Our victuals are not yet come to us ; and if this wind continue God knows when it will come ’ ; and in the same letter he speaks movingly of his men : ‘ I think there was never a willinger company to do their Prince service than these be.’

Howard's pedestrian talents dwindle into insignificance beside the cool brilliant genius

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of Drake and his blazing recklessness ; but each Admiral was excellent as the complement of the other. Howard's gentleness prevented any breach of decorum throughout these trying days when each morning ten thousand men would waken hopeful and excited and each night go to bed bored and heavy-hearted.

Drake could inspire these men to a bravery that took absolutely no regard of self ; but Howard's inborn quality of leadership combined an easy assumption of responsibility with a casual implication that he expected every man at all times to come up to scratch. These were the attributes that held the men throughout the tiresome summer days of inactivity.

But on June 15th Howard's patience, that had long been taut, snapped like an overtense string. He had received a letter from Walsingham. A letter to make a man sick with anger and to send his temper flying high.

The Queen and the Council were worried, according to Walsingham. But what of our worries ? thought Howard savagely. The Queen 'thinketh it not convenient that your Lordship should go so far to the South as the said Isles of Bayona, but to ply up and down in some indifferent place.'



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‘Ply up and down’—Howard raged. ‘Ply up and down’ till all our food is consumed, and what then? Lie quietly off our own coast until such time as Philip chooses to attack us?

For by now Howard, with all the extravagant fervour of the convert, was as firmly convinced of the soundness of Drake’s plans for an offensive campaign as Drake was himself. With anger and resolution he took up his pen. ‘Sir, for the meaning we had to go on the coast of Spain it was deeply debated by those I think the world doth judge to be men of greatest experience that this realm hath; which are these: Sir Francis Drake, Mr. Hawkyns, Mr. Frobisher and Mr. Thomas Fenner; and I hope Her Majesty will not think that we want so rashly to work or without a principal and choice care and respect for the safety of this realm.’

And then, later, with legitimate irony and bite he added: ‘But I must and will obey; and am glad there be such there as are able to judge what is fitter for us to do than we here; but by my instructions which I had, I did think it otherwise. But I will put them up in a bag.’

This was no man of action kicking against the pricks, but a great noble, a natural leader protesting against the absurd infringement of

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his right of decision by a crew of creeping pale Councillors whose gods were their country's money-bags and whose honour was a straw blown about in the wind of expedience.

In the same letter, too, with unstinting generosity he wrote : ' Sir, you know it hath been the opinion both of Her Majesty and others that it was the surest course to lie on the coast of Spain. I confess my error at that time which was otherwise ; but I did, and will yield ever unto them of greater experience.'

It is sad that the man who formulated and lived by these principles later displayed such extraordinary pettiness towards his second-in-command, but at that date his conduct of affairs merits nothing but praise.

From that day things mended. On June 19th the wind was favourable and the fleet put out to sea, but by great misfortune the wind veered round again and they were obliged to run back to the Sound, thereby missing the chance of engaging with the Spanish squadron that had arrived at the Scilly rendezvous in ignorance of Sidonia's return to Corunna.

The depression that followed on this second frustration was not long lasting, for soon Howard, whose passion had penetrated the reluctant skulls of the Council, received a

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despatch according him freedom of action, and at long last the victualling ships arrived.

Once again the torches and cressets flared in the harbour where men worked by night as well as by day distributing and loading in frantic haste.

Reports and rumours came in thick and fast. A Spanish squadron had been seen—and another—and a third—three huge Spanish squadrons—was it the whole Armada?

Drake did not think so. He was convinced that the Armada, distressed and scattered by the weather, was lying up somewhere, and would still provide a target for a venomous attack.

On Saturday, June 23rd, the fleet put out again, but being met by a contrary wind from the south-south-west was compelled to lie up. Drake's anxiety was acute. The men were on short rations and were grumbling now. There was sickness on board. Time and opportunity were flying by. Moved fully as much by an accurate summing up of the Spanish situation as by an irresistible impulse to attack, he prevailed on Howard to sail southward on July 7th.

The spirit of the fleet changed at once. Short commons mattered not at all. Soon they would destroy the enemy and enjoy his stores. Soon there would be fighting, blood-





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shed, prizes to be taken and ships to be looted. They sped along towards Corunna where the half-demoralised Armada lay at their mercy, but once again God disposed as the English Admirals had not proposed. The north wind died. One hour it was blowing freshly and the full sails were rounded and strong. The next it was but a fitful playful breeze and they flapped, then filled again, then flapped more disconsolately than before. And presently it died, and a south wind whispered in the rigging. If the fleet waited for the weather to change, the men must starve. So yet again they turned homeward, and this amazing eleventh-hour move was rendered null and void.

On July 12th back at Plymouth there was the same work to do again of revictualling and minor repairs, but confidence was rising.

Then, on July 19th, on a fine Friday afternoon, Captain Fleming's pinnace scudded into Plymouth Harbour with news that set the town ablaze with excitement. Old men were drawn to their cottage doors to listen and wag their beards and make their mumbling comments. The children playing in the street were all agape. Only the Admirals, playing bowls—so the old story runs—on the Hoe after dinner maintained an air of casual

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serenity on hearing that the whole Armada had been sighted off the Lizard.

Possibly it is even true that Drake with a chuckle, a careless shrug of his heavy shoulders, announced that he would finish his game : ' There's time for that and to beat the Spaniards after.'

All down the ages the bearers of just such startling news have been greeted by just such tranquil aristocratic gestures. The tenue of the great man—not free from bravura though not necessarily crowd-conscious—would appear to comprise a certain easy nonchalance, a rapid concealment of perturbation, a refusal to participate in herd-movements of agitation and dramatic excitement. It is for servant women to run hither and thither chattering and exclaiming, for serfs and lackeys to cower ; but for centuries the cultivated man in Rome and Greece and Europe has betrayed his inner excitement only by some small movement. Perhaps he adjusts his toga, or fingers his beard, or raises his monocle to his eye, or twitches his service cap awry ; but his comment is always made with the same apparent negligence.

So now Drake made his gesture of calm defiance, which must have discomfited poor Captain Fleming, who came bursting in with the news, as much as it enheartened the panic-

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struck populace and steadied the morale of the fleet. There was no lack of energy, however, in the English Admirals ; no facile acquiescence in an awkward state of affairs. Howard, Drake, Frobisher, Hawkins were not the men to submit to being the victims of the trick they themselves had meant to play on the Spaniards. The fleet was all in Plymouth Sound, the wind was dead against them ; it would entail difficult and dangerous manœuvring to warp out into the open, but it had to be done. It was not their part to await the pleasure of the enemy, with bared teeth, like rats in a trap.

Philip for months had been spending his personality in spilling out encouragement and admonition on officers and men alike. The necessary impetus had all come from him. His fleet was a conglomeration of heterogeneous elements ; many of his men were undoubtedly fired by his enthusiasm, many hated the business in hand.

Elizabeth for months had been the object of her officers' insistent appeals to be allowed to fight ; to sail out and attack the enemy and end the game with one shrewd blow. The hesitations and delays in England had all been due to Queen and Council ; in Spain it was the King alone who had never hesitated.

At last the two great fleets, both now





SIR JOHN HAWKINS

*(From an anonymous portrait, British School)*

## THE SPANISH ARMADA

animated by the lust of battle and the eager hope of victory, were to meet on the open seas. At last Spain must conquer England or be broken by her sturdy resistance.

In the teeth of a strong wind all through that short, bright, summer night of July 19th the English fleet warped out of Plymouth Harbour. The tricky manœuvre was brilliantly executed, and by the Saturday afternoon Howard with fifty-four sail was out nearly at the Eddystone.

The Duke of Medina Sidonia had had a difficult passage from the river Tagus, delayed at times by calms, at times by stormy weather. The Portuguese and Castilian squadrons had each lost a galleon. A Levant merchantman was missing too, and four hulks from the light division. Dirty weather in the Bay had forced Recalde to leave his flagship, and the galleys had given up and been sent back.

Sidonia's crews too were reduced by sickness and last-minute desertions at Corunna to some twenty-four thousand men.

The delay that had told on Spain's resources had told on England's too. Sickness had been rampant in Plymouth, and Howard had abandoned some vessels in order to man the others fully, but even so the English galleon division was approximately on an equality with the Spanish galleon squadrons, although England

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had nothing to pit against the four fine Neapolitan galleasses: the *Napolitania*, the *San Lorenzo*, the *Zuniga* and the *Girona*, all well armed.

Don Pedro de Valdez' squadron had sailed in advance of the rest of the Armada, and it was he who had been signalled off the Lizard.

On the Saturday Sidonia joined him, and they looked together at the beacons flaring on every little hill along the coast of England to announce their arrival. On the *San Martin* Sidonia ran up his Holy Banner, the crucified Christ on one side and the Virgin-Mother on the other, and on every ship of the huge Armada the decks were occupied by kneeling men, many of whom must shortly die in this great contest that was destined to splinter into agonising fragments the pride of their ambitious King.

## CHAPTER III

‘Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.’ The Epistle of James iii. 4.

### I

THE Saturday that began with hopeful prayers was an unsatisfactory and irritating day for the Spaniards.

In the morning Sidonia held a Council of War, whose plans were hindered by the fact that they had no precise knowledge as to the movements of the English fleet beyond the fact that they thought it safe to assume that Drake and his squadron were lying in the Sound.

Lieutenant-General Leyva urged an attack on Plymouth, and it is probable that Recalde and Oquendo and some of the keener officers supported him. The Duke, however, inexperienced, able only to act by the book, and possibly hampered by the comprehensive lucidity of Philip’s instructions, was unwilling to risk an attack on a harbour which only

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three ships abreast could enter, and from which it would be very difficult to withdraw.

A certain degree of jealousy, too, had blown up between the two kinsmen, Don Diego de Valdez and Don Pedro de Valdez, and Sidonia's Council was a stormy and quarrelsome affair.

The Duke clung limpet-like to Philip's orders, which were if possible to avoid an engagement until a junction had been effected with the Duke of Parma off Dunkirk ; but in the end his officers persuaded him at least to set a course towards Plymouth, with the object of falling upon it if circumstances should appear favourable.

The whole Armada accordingly sailed slowly along the coast, totally unaware that its movements were observed through the murk and drizzle of a wet July afternoon by the English fleet which lay about five leagues to the east.

In the evening, however, its stately progress was abruptly checked when, in spite of the damp mist, a number of ships were sighted ahead.

The Spaniards realised at once that these must be Drake's, and the hearts of the men sank with accustomed terror at his name, while the officers gave vent to their angry surprise that in such an unfavourable wind

he should nevertheless have ventured out of the Sound to lie in wait for them.

All through the evening they racked their brains to find a solution for this awkward situation, but soon after midnight a small pinnace returned from reconnoitring with news that threw them into a worse confusion than before.

The report was, that Howard and Drake had joined fleets and were lying at full strength between the Spaniards and their objective. Finally, at a loss for inspiration, Sidonia came to anchor and signalled to the squadron commanders to form battle order and await a probable enemy attack at dawn.

The particular battle order observed by the Armada has been referred to variously as a crescent, half-moon, or eagle formation.

Philip had for once not issued precise orders on this point, because like the rest of Europe he appreciated the fact that the English had been developing new tactics, and a new formation would be required to meet them.

But his assumption and that of the Duke and his officers had always been that Howard's fleet would be lying in the Channel fairly far along towards the east, while Drake guarded the west. There was, therefore, this great danger to consider: that Drake might well allow the Armada to pass, and then at his

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pleasure nip out of Plymouth Harbour and attack the rear, while Howard attended to the leading galleons.

With this idea always at the back of their minds, Sidonia and his officers accordingly disposed the fleet into two more or less independent divisions. Howard was to be matched by Sidonia and Don Diego in the *San Martin*, with both galleon divisions, constituting the main battle ; while in the rear were two wings, constituting a double division to engage with Drake : one wing, the vanguard, being commanded by Leyva in the *Rata* ; the other, the rearguard, under Recalde in the *San Juan*.

All three divisions contained vessels of all classes, but in front, galleons were in a preponderance, and the wings were mainly formed of armed merchantmen. Unable to forget Drake even for a moment, however, the Duke stiffened the rear division by two big well-armed galleasses.

In the middle of the night the drizzle subsided, a little breeze sprang up and the moon rose in a clear sky.

The English fleet, watching the heavy dark mass of enemy ships in the distance, stole softly out to sea, across the front of the Armada, meanwhile sending out a small detachment of eight ships to manœuvre close to the land

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and draw attention from the movement of the bulk of the fleet.

Their bobbing lights effectively puzzled the Spaniards, while the main English fleet, hushing the creak of rigging, the boisterous shouts of officers giving orders and men springing to carry them out, stretched out seaward beyond the Armada, and, taking advantage of a more westerly wind, edged steadily over to starboard.

In the clammy light of early morning, Sidonia, with spirits already chilled by a long night of doubts and anxious cogitations, was horror-struck to see that the ships whose movements they had been watching all night were but a small part of the enemy fleet, and the rest were bearing down on them in the rear, stretched out formidably in that line-ahead formation which Raleigh laid down as right in the general orders he issued in 1617 : 'The whole fleet shall follow the Admiral, Vice-Admiral or other leading ships within musket-shot of the enemy, giving so much liberty to the leading ship after her broadside discovered as she may stay and trim her sails ; then is the second ship to give her side, and the third and the fourth, which done they shall tack as the first ship, and giving the enemy the other side shall keep him under a perpetual volley. Thus must you do to the



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windermost ship of the enemy which you shall batter in pieces or force her to bear up and entangle the rest, falling foul of one another to their great confusion.'

This order, not made explicit for another thirty years, was nevertheless observed on that Sunday morning of July 21st.

Sidonia was further confused by the fact that some of the Queen's big galleons, which until then had been quite unable to emerge from the Sound, were now seen streaming forth, so that he feared he had indeed fallen upon the grave mischance that had been possible all along, of finding Howard in front of him and Drake in the rear.

He had, however, no alternative but to fight whether he wanted or no, so he ran up the Royal Standard, which was the signal for a general engagement.

He then gave orders for an inshore movement as if the Armada were about to attack Plymouth itself, but the English fleet had the weather-gauge, outsailed the Spaniards and fell upon the rearguard.

The fire from the English ships had a rapidity and a density never before experienced, and the rearguard, baffled and routed, crowded forward on to Sidonia's division.

The confusion and panic were considerable, and Recalde's courage stood him in ill stead ;

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for, alone of the rearguard, he brought the *San Juan* up into the wind against the English and she was instantly surrounded and cut off.

The big galleon *San Mateo*, trying to come to her rescue, was attacked by the small squadron that had successfully misled the Spaniards during the night.

Sidonia, manœuvring round to stand by his Vice-Admiral, encountered two Queen's galleons, and for two hours the crew of the *San Juan*, inspired by their Commander's gallantry, sustained the brunt of the whole engagement and endured continuous fire from Drake, Hawkins and Frobisher.

It was understandable for Drake to write laconically next day that 'there hath passed some cannon shot between some of our fleet and some of them.' He had some cause to be disappointed at the indecisive nature of the engagement, but Recalde, who had stood up alone against the batteries of the English fleet, might well have thought 'some cannon shot' an understatement of the case.

When Sidonia succeeded in rallying the panic-stricken rearguard and coming to the assistance of the *San Juan*, Howard gave the signal to retire.

It was probably a wise move, though upsetting to the more hot-headed members of his staff. He had only two-thirds of the fleet

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with him, and his crews were not complete, although the Mayor of Plymouth was busily engaged in assembling men to send out in pinnaces to join him. But it is, too, an indubitable fact that at that moment he was surprised by the size and dignity of the Armada.

On the same evening he wrote these words to Walsingham: 'At nine of the clock we gave them fight which continued until one. In this fight we made some of them to bear room to stop their leaks; notwithstanding we durst not adventure to put in among them, their fleet being so strong. But there shall be nothing either neglected or unhazarded that may work them their overthrow.'

Howard was not uneasy, but he was certainly impressed.

In the afternoon, as the fleet lay about half a league to leeward of the Armada, a small incident occurred that looked as if it might precipitate another engagement.

Both fleets were at rest when suddenly an explosion was heard from the *San Salvador*.

The story goes that a Flemish gunner on board had suffered constant injustice at the hands of a Spanish captain of soldiers, and finally feeling himself too deeply insulted, too sorely misused, decided to commit suicide. He therefore placed himself in a barrel of gun-

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powder and set it alight. His suicidal intention was carried out, but with consequences that he had probably not foreseen, for his ship, the *San Salvador*, the largest of the Guiposcoan squadron, burst into flames.

The English, with infuriating but praiseworthy promptitude, advanced on the flaming wreck. Recalde, to whose squadron the *San Salvador* belonged, called for assistance. The wind had risen and a fairly heavy sea was getting up, so that the ships trying to rally round him found themselves in considerable difficulties, and Don Pedro de Valdez fouled two hulks, to his great detriment.

The squadrons did, however, succeed in getting into position, and Howard gave the order to retire.

It had been a tolerable day for both sides, yet unsatisfactory to both. Sidonia had certainly so far carried out Philip's orders in that he had avoided a serious engagement and was proceeding up the Channel towards Dunkirk and Parma, but two of his best ships had been mauled and disabled, the *San Salvador* by accident, the *San Juan* by the English.

The English felt that this first encounter had fallen a little flat. It had produced no decisive result ; it had been a mere skirmish tantalisingly ineffective. But as a prelude it

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was clearly indicative of what was to come. The English had used the weather to their advantage ; had been able to seize every opportunity of damaging the enemy ; had advanced when they thought it profitable to do so, and retired as soon as they thought wise.

The great Armada, free now, and sailing up the Channel with the distressed ships temporarily repaired, had nevertheless been outmanœuvred, and had been victim of the winds instead of their master. At one moment the ships had been huddled together on a panic. At another they had fouled each other. Although individually they had fought with courage and endurance that had matched their enemy's, it was inevitable from the first day that the beautiful and spectacular Spanish fleet must break before the sturdy sea-craft of the English.

## II

The next twenty-four hours were free of fighting, but full of incident.

The fleets were at last in contact. They had enjoyed and endured a preliminary try-out, and their respective strengths and weaknesses were beginning to be apparent.

A feeling of nervous tension was the natural

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result of these first few hours of fighting off Plymouth, and, as well, the lust of battle was in no way assuaged. Now was precisely the moment when personal difficulties were bound to crop up ; when jealousy would rear its head and incompetence show starkly forth. The Councils of War on both Spanish and English flagships must now necessarily be hectic and agitated.

All along Sidonia had been clinging helplessly to Philip's instructions. They were a prop and support to him ; he fell back on them in argument as the stupid man falls back on his accustomed cliché. His officers, however, were no longer prepared to let themselves be over-ridden. He was a great man, a prince of Spain, and his blood and lineage, if not his prowess, commanded the most profound respect, but the time had come for plans to be made which must undoubtedly determine the success or failure of the expedition, and Recalde, Oquendo and both the de Valdez appreciated that Philip's idea of sailing to Dunkirk to meet Parma was unsound.

They knew at last that Drake and Howard were, indeed, together in their rear ; prepared to follow them like a pack of yapping terriers, restlessly alert, nipping at stragglers and harrying the last few ships. And Seymour's fleet

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was still unaccounted for, and must therefore be lying somewhere ahead, comfortably waiting for the moment when the Armada should loom into sight with Howard and Drake at its tail.

By now they had tasted enough of the English broadsides to relish very little the idea of lying between the fire of two fleets, and they determined to persuade the Duke to abandon his plans and, instead, make for and seize the Isle of Wight.

The advantages of such a course were obvious. The Wight was handy for France, Spain and Flanders : once taken, it could be easily possessed and its harbours used as a safe refuge for the Spanish ships, which could emerge at their pleasure to raid the mainland. Recalde, deeming an English base so essential that he had urged Sidonia to occupy some port far enough west to be in direct communication with Spain, was particularly strong on this point ; that a safe refuge in the Channel was necessary to ensure success ; and in the end he persuaded Sidonia of the wisdom of his scheme. Accordingly, as soon as the mauled and damaged ships were fit to sail, Sidonia gave order to proceed along the Channel towards the Wight.

The wind had risen meanwhile, and in the choppy seas the *Nuestra Señora del Rosario* got

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into trouble. Her mainmast went overboard, fouling the foremast in its passage, and leaving her hopelessly crippled.

Don Pedro de Valdez, her commander, signalled distress, but Sidonia, thinking it unwise to delay the whole fleet, sent a galleon and a galleasse to stand by and tow her if possible, and, if not, to receive her commander and crew. Don Diego de Valdez was on board the *San Martin*, therefore presumably had the Duke's ear ; and Don Pedro took it as a personal affront, and held it against both the Duke and his kinsman that he had been dishonourably deserted. Filled with bitterness, he lay-to and watched the Armada streaming up the Channel in the pleasant summer twilight.

Howard's Council of War had deduced rightly that the Armada's next objective would be the Wight, and they determined to follow close on the Spaniards heels and attack at the first favourable moment.

The captains were instructed as to the course to be followed, and to Drake was given the honour of leading the fleet throughout the night.

At midnight they set sail, the eyes of the look-out men fastened attentively on the huge lantern burning on the poop of the *Revenge*. In the absolute darkness of a cloudy night



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this was their only guide, their only hope of keeping together on the appointed course ; and suddenly that light disappeared completely. One moment it was there ; the next, gone.

Howard, in spite of his own clear command to Drake to lead the fleet, now, in Drake's sudden inexplicable absence, held on his course, followed by the *Mary Rose* and the *Bear*. Uncertain whether to follow Howard or wait for Drake, some ships shortened sail and went half-heartedly on, while others lay-to. The confusion was complete. In these short hours between midnight and dawn the whole English fleet was scattered over a stretch of some miles.

Viewed from our modern standpoint, which looks on discipline and co-ordination as among the highest contributory factors to success in warfare, Drake's action is difficult to excuse. The fact is bald and simple : he was appointed to lead the fleet, and in the middle of the night he abandoned his post. Undoubtedly, whatever his reasons, the school that adheres to the 'Theirs-not-to-reason-why' theory must condemn him. It is a school that sets obedience above intelligent independence, and blind courage above a calculated recklessness. For the last three centuries war has been developing in a way that has made

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it necessary for the individual to surrender his personality and submerge himself in the whole. Carried to its logical conclusion, as for instance in the Brigade of Guards, this system produces quite extraordinarily success-



THE FLEETS OFF PORTLAND

*(From the engraving by John Pine)*

ful results. The man is lost in the more valuable automaton.

But the Elizabethans were reared in a very different school. Their training, such as it was, all tended to make the individual more competent and self-reliant, and very little regard was paid to group-efficiency. War

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was not yet conducted by mass-movements : it was an opportunity for the individual.

For Drake, therefore, to have stayed rigidly at his post and to have watched several large hulks stealing past him to seaward, would have been ridiculous.

It was a reasonable assumption that these hulks going so mysteriously about their business under cover of the dark, were Spanish ships executing a neat manœuvre by night in order to attack in the rear at dawn. Drake accordingly extinguished his light and put about in sharp pursuit.

Certainly his action resulted in a tiresome state of affairs, but that was largely because Howard persisted on his course ; and between the disappearance of one leader and the sudden substitution of another the ships' masters were at a complete loss.

At sunrise the Armada was seen by Howard to be lying off Berry Head, but he was powerless to attack owing to the delay in arrival of the bulk of the fleet.

During the morning the ships gradually came up on him, and a pinnace brought in the news that Drake had captured Don Pedro's ship. Feelings were mixed. There were those, Frobisher among them, who felt that Drake's conduct had been improper, but when the Admiral returned, the fleet for the

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most part accepted his explanation as reasonable, and Howard made no comment on it.

Drake had enjoyed one of the exciting adventurous nights that suited him very well. He had dashed off, accompanied by the *Roebuck*, after these strange hulks that were slipping past him in the dark, and had ultimately come up with them and found them to be innocent German merchantmen. Probably a little disappointed at being balked of his prey and at having made this useless détour, Drake was going to put about when he fell in with the *Nuestra Señora del Rosario*.

The sight of the dilapidated vessel warmed his heart, and he ordered her to surrender. Don Pedro, like all Spaniards a believer in ceremony and formalities, stated elaborate conditions. Drake's reply was peremptory. He had no time ; he was in a hurry to get back ; Don Pedro must fight or surrender.

The Spaniard was discreet enough to choose the latter, feeling it no disgrace to be captured by the most redoubtable of English captains. There had been a time when 'Juan Achines,' the Spanish version of Hawkins' name, had called up more terror than any other, but now for some time past Drake had taken a far higher place, and surrender to such a man was as nearly a pleasure as surrender can ever be.

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After a mutual exchange of compliments and some amiable conversation, Drake ordered the *Roebuck* to take the prize into Torbay while he himself, with Don Pedro on board very honourably treated, sped back in search of Howard.

Such was his simple and credible explanation of what looked like neglect of his duty.

The spirits of the whole fleet were brightened by the capture of this first prize, and by another piece of good luck which fell to them while Howard was waiting for his ships. *San Salvador*, the big vessel that had been partially burnt the day before, signalled distress. Sidonia, seeing her condition was hopeless, decided to sink her, but before he could do so the English were upon her and sent her into Weymouth with her scarred and burnt human cargo.

The Armada had now lost two of its biggest ships, and Recalde's, as well, was temporarily out of action, so that Leyva was given command of the two rear wings, which were furthered stiffened by a few more galleons.

The Armada sailed on with Howard following, and by evening the English fleet was complete again, but unfortunately the wind fell, and it was impossible for the ships to take up their correct stations for battle.

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That night both fleets lay in the calm moonlight between Portland and St. Alban's Head, and at early dawn the Spaniards observed a small group of English ships lying a little apart from the others.

It seemed to them a propitious moment to attack. If they did so, the other English ships that would undoubtedly rally round might possibly be grappled and boarded, and the Spaniards would at last get a taste of that close fighting which they liked as much as they disliked the English long-range artillery. They still adhered to the old principle of conducting a naval war as if they were on terra firma, by seizing every opportunity of hand-to-hand fighting. The English, however, by developing a whole new system of naval warfare based on good gunnery and the mobility of their ships, had thwarted them consistently throughout the previous day.

Now was a possible opportunity for the Spanish to impose their type of offensive, and Recalde urged Sidonia to order the galleasses to attack.

This put the poor Duke in a quandary.

Don Hugo de Moncada was Captain-General of the Neapolitan galleasses, a Catalan Knight, and an extremely proud, touchy and awkward subordinate. Only a short time before he had asked permission to attack

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Howard himself. This was the prerogative of the Duke, and it had been very properly refused, but now Don Hugo was in a difficult mood.

Sidonia, embarrassed, fingered his chin, and looked down at his feet, and fidgeted and hummed and hawed, until at last Oquendo volunteered to carry his order in person to Don Hugo. The Duke leapt at the suggestion with pathetic relief, and even promised Oquendo the sum of three thousand ducats if he could persuade the refractory Knight to do as he was told !

But Don Hugo, sullen, touched in his pride, received his orders in silence, and continued in his policy of superbly insolent inactivity. And the English ships went unharmed, because the Lord Admiral of the Great Armada had to reckon with undisciplined arrogance in his subordinates.

At daylight the wind was blowing from the north-east. The Spaniards therefore had the weather gauge, and about five o'clock in the morning their decorous great standard was run up to indicate a general engagement.

The English opened this confused and puzzling Battle of Portland with an inshore movement to regain the weather gauge. Their movement was checked by the galleasses, which, having been roundly cursed by

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Sidonia as he sailed past them, had at last condescended to come to life again.

Howard immediately went about, with Hawkins in the *Victory*, Sir Robert Southwell in the *Elizabeth Jonas*, and Thomas Fenner in the *Nonpareil* following him in line-ahead formation. This group poured several fierce volleys into Leyva's rear division, and then, according to Howard's rather euphemistic description, the Spanish ships 'were content to fall astern of the *Nonpareil* which was the sternmost ship.' The equally euphemistic Spanish Relation states that 'Howard was forced to give way and run to leeward followed by his consorts.'

Both were right but neither strictly true. The English had failed to keep their course to windward, the Spaniards had failed to board them, and the result was that although Howard and his consorts were not forced to 'run to leeward' they were isolated from the rest of the fleet which Howard now sailed seaward in order to rejoin.

Frobisher, at this moment, with five other vessels was heavily engaged, and was moreover in an awkward position for manœuvring. Sidonia, seizing his opportunity, sent the galleasses against him, and Frobisher's peril was extreme. But so was his courage. He continued to fight most valiantly, and although



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it was obvious to the fleet that he was in danger, it seemed likely that he could hold on till help came.

Meanwhile what about Drake?

The ungenerous silence that Howard preserves in his account of the various battles from now on, is not only a slur on himself, but, more tragically, makes the part that Drake played a matter rather of conjecture than of proven fact.

It seems probable, however, from the Spanish accounts, which describe the movements of a *Capitana* which can be none other than the *Revenge*, that Drake, seeing that Howard had been balked in his inshore movement, tacked independently and fell on the right wing of the Armada so fiercely that the vessels were forced to fall back into their defensive formation and lost the advantage of the wind.

Drake then succeeded in cutting off Recalde's decrepit vessel, and riddled it with broadside after broadside, until the galleons came to its rescue, when he immediately sheered off and rejoined Howard.

The situation was changing as the wind veered round. Howard had made a determined effort to come to Frobisher's aid, 'which the Duke of Medina perceiving came out with sixteen of his best galleons to impeach his Lordship, and stop him from assisting of

## THE SPANISH ARMADA

the *Triumph*. At which assault, after a wonderful sharp conflict, the Spaniards were forced to give way and to flock together like sheep.'

The Duke's galleon, the *San Martin*, suffered very heavily from the combined fire of Howard and Drake. The rigging was torn and disordered, the Holy Standard was ripped up—an evil omen, this—and the boats which rallied round were also very severely maltreated.

The English, however, were now running short of powder and shot, and though both sides were dissatisfied by the sporadic and inconclusive nature of the battle, both sides were glad to stop fighting about five o'clock in the afternoon.

### III

That evening the English sent pinnaces ashore requisitioning stores and ammunition ; but the Spaniards had no such advantage. They were in enemy waters off enemy shores, and must simply live on their resources and effect what repairs were possible without new materials.

The next day, Wednesday, July 24th, was a day of furious preparation.

Howard had been extremely impressed by

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the impregnability of the Armada's defence. So far, all enemy offensive had failed. There had been no grappling or boarding. But in its defensive formation the Armada was a very hard nut to crack. Tuesday's battle, divided arbitrarily into a series of individual engagements and skirmishes, had shown the necessity for some reorganisation of the English fleet. It was obvious that a more concerted attack would be necessary to break up the strength of the formidable massed Armada. And, too, excitement and loyalty had reached fever-heat along the coast, and constant reinforcements were arriving from the shore, which invigorated the crews but introduced at the same time a new and untried element.

The Council decided on a more formal disposition of the fleet, and divided it into four squadrons, under Howard, Drake, Hawkins and Frobisher. This last had borne the brunt on the previous day, and it was fitting that the honour of a new command should be paid to him.

Some exchange of hostilities certainly took place on that morning, though the English ignore all mention of it, and in the afternoon the Armada formed into its complicated sailing order.

Howard threatened attack.

The Armada re-formed in battle order.

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Howard remained passive.

Obviously this irritating cat-and-mouse game might be indefinitely prolonged ; so Sidonia, very much annoyed, revised his plans and detailed forty ships to maintain battle order and form a permanent rearguard.

Then at last they moved majestically off—the English, as always, just at their rear—and held their course until they were becalmed about six leagues off the Isle of Wight.

Obviously if the English were to prevent them carrying out their designs on the Wight, they must attack as soon as possible, and at dawn on Thursday the 25th, although it was dangerously calm, the English with a series of brilliant and dangerous manœuvres forced an action.

One large galleon, the *San Luis*, was lying protectively in the rear of the Armada, and Hawkins had the *Victory* towed out near enough to attack her.

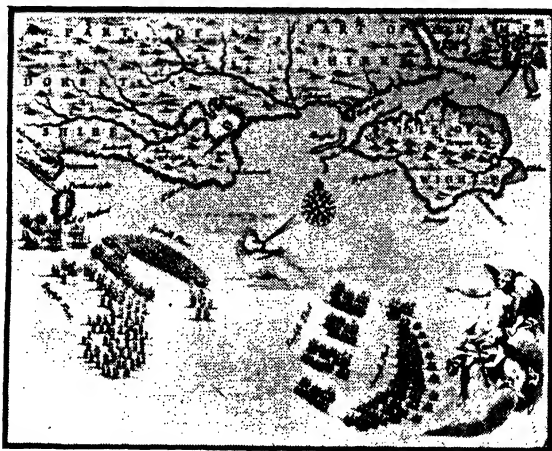
Leyva in the *Rata* came out against him, followed by galleasses and other vessels, whereupon Howard in the *Ark* and Lord Thomas Howard in the *Golden Lion* had themselves towed out in opposition.

There was a sharp fight, in which such considerable damage was inflicted on the galleasses that they played very little part in the later engagements, but in the end the *San Luis*

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was rescued and fell away from the unwelcome English attentions.

The wind then rose, and the action became more general, but again in his description of this fight Howard concentrates more and more



THE FLEETS OFF THE ISLE OF WIGHT

*(From the engraving by John Pine)*

on the activities of himself and Lord Thomas his kinsman, and therefore the parts played by Drake, Hawkins and Frobisher must again be deduced from Spanish narratives.

Shortly after the wind got up Sidonia was attacked by a ship to which the Spanish account gives the title of 'Capitana' (flagship).

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She cannot have been Howard's, since he never mentions the incident as he undoubtedly would have done, and she does not appear to have been Drake's, since the same account goes on to describe her as 'the largest ship in the enemy's fleet.' Very probably then she was the *Triumph* with Frobisher on board, and the Spanish, with their predilection for size and grandeur, made the natural mistake of assuming that, being the largest, she must be the Capitana. She attacked the *San Martin* very boldly, damaged her rigging, and killed a number of soldiers, bringing the Duke to such a plight that, had it not been for the opportune assistance of some of the rear-guard, he might have lost his ship. When he was thus reinforced he in his turn attacked the *Triumph*, which was much distressed, but took advantage of the freshening wind and sheered off.

Nothing as yet had determined the fortunes of the day, and Howard says nothing of any further action, except that 'the fight after that continued not long, saving that the *Nonpareil* and the *Mary Rose* struck their top-sails and lay awhile by the whole fleet of Spain very bravely.'

This is extremely significant. The *Mary Rose* under Fenton was in Hawkins' squadron, and the *Nonpareil* under Thomas Fenner in

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Drake's. Presumably then these squadrons were engaged together in some manœuvre which Howard lacked the decency to describe, or which, just possibly, he may not have fully understood owing to his own activities.

Apparently what happened was this : Drake, seeing that Sidonia was lying near that dangerous stretch of sandbanks called 'The Owers,' conceived the simple but extremely correct plan of making a decisive attack on the weather flank, so that the Armada should be, if not between the devil and the deep sea, certainly between El Draque and the sand.

A Spanish narrative written by the master of one of the Seville ships describes the attack thus : 'The enemy's Capitana turned upon our Armada, and the galleon *San Mateo* which had the point of the weather wing gave way to it, retreating into the body of the Armada. Seeing that, the enemy took heart and turned with his whole fleet, or the greater part of it, and charged upon the said wing, in such wise that we who were there were driven into a corner, so that if the Duke had not gone about with his flagship, instead of conquerors that we were, we should have come out vanquished that day. Seeing that, those of his Armada that had been cut off, bore up to rejoin.'

It was this action, the attack by Drake and Hawkins on the weathermost ships of the

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Spanish vanguard, that decided the day. Howard and Frobisher were definitely engaged elsewhere, and it is therefore only reasonable to assume that the attack was made by the two Admirals most capable both of planning it and carrying it out.

That Howard, who was a gentleman and capable at times of a graceful recognition of Drake's superiority, should hide his knowledge of this successful attack under a few words of praise for two of the lesser ships engaged in it, is almost unthinkable. And yet it is still more unthinkable that he, the Lord Admiral of the English fleet, did not even know why the Armada, after a five hours' fight outside the station which the Spaniards so passionately desired to possess, suddenly at ten o'clock in the morning apparently abandoned hope, and made off so fast towards Calais, that by three o'clock it was out of sight of England.

Unhappily it must be admitted that Howard failed in generosity and justice ; but it must be remembered too—though such a glamour hangs round him that it is easy to lose sight of these harsh facts—that Drake was of an aggressive and difficult temper, with the faculty of making enemies almost as highly developed as his charming ability to command friendship and loyal service.



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### IV

The engagement off the Isle of Wight, like the two that had preceded it, was disappointing to the English seamen. Their appetite had been whetted by the earlier fights, and now, although they had certainly succeeded in dislodging the enemy from his coveted position, and had gained a pronounced tactical advantage, there had still been no single spectacular battle, in which the enemy fleet, scattered and broken, had been forced to surrender to superior strength and valour. Instead, the sinister dark bulk of the Armada was forging steadily across the Channel, while the English seamen, piqued and soured, left their home shores to follow in pursuit.

In the south of England the piercing anxiety that the visible presence of a huge enemy fleet naturally induced was diminished as that fleet sped away and was lost to sight for the first time in six days, but although there was no longer such obvious cause to worry, there was no diminuendo in the bustle and excitement that pervaded the seaports.

The shortage of ammunition was causing the mayors of all the coastal towns acute anxiety. Richard Pitt, Mayor of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis, having been ordered

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by a message from Howard to obtain from the two prizes sent in all powder and shot and despatch it with all possible speed, communicated in frenzied haste with his fellow-mayors and other officers, Mr. John Jones of Lyme Regis, Mr. Robert Denis, Sir John Gilbert and Sir George Carey of Torbay.

The destination of the fleet was somewhat vaguely given by Mr. Pitt, thus : ' You shall find the English fleet on the seas, between this place and the Isle of Wight, or Eastward.' But the instructions were carried out, and Howard received the fresh supplies which everybody now understood that he would certainly stand in need of.

Neither the Queen nor the Queen's administration should be blamed for this shortage of ammunition, as they must and should be blamed for the inadequacy of food and drink supplied to the fleet. No such great quantities of powder and shot had ever been used before, and nobody had clearly predicted the necessity of carrying so much ammunition. The English were to some extent hoist with their own petard. Their gunnery had advanced with great strides, but they had not had the vision and foresight to make full provision for its employment.

The question of food is quite another matter. That the delays in getting out supplies were

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unreasonably prolonged cannot be denied ; but it is at least satisfactory to note that on July 26th, when the ships had crossed the Channel, Robert Salmon, Master of the Trinity House, was agitating on their behalf to Burghley asking for authority to provide them with victuals. ' If there be not beef enough ready, they shall have fish and peas, butter or cheese, and let them go. The brewer and baker will provide hastily for some fourteen days or more ; if it may be within this time done it will be some good encouragement to my Lord Admiral and those that be in service with him, and a discouragement to the enemy.'

These last sentences must surely in their calculated simplicity have appealed to the most well-fed courtier, and at no time was Burghley insensible to the arguments of commonsense, so that one may happily conclude that if the sailors did not receive their beef, at least they had fish and peas whose vitamins must have stood them in good stead.

At this date, too, when the position, although still critical, was less so than it had been before these several inconclusive but significant trials of strength, volunteers were flocking to the land defences, and Howard was turning away scores of surplus men for whom he could find no room on any of his ships. A passion of

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loyalty, of dear love for the Queen's person, and protectiveness for the Throne was sweeping over London and the Southern Counties, infecting such unlikely subjects as Sir Horatio Palavicini, a Genoese banker settled in England, who addressed to Walsingham a request that he might be permitted 'to depart as this night towards Portsmouth, there to embark and join the Lord Admiral, where I hope to be present in the battle and thereby a partaker in the victory or to win an honourable death, thus to testify to the whole world my fidelity to Her Majesty.'

Everybody was high-hearted ; a common excitement inflamed the Court and the common people. Even the small sleepy hamlets between the coast and London were caught by it. Hodge and his wife lay on their pallet at nights, ignorant of what was happening, since no newspapers interrupted the quiet monotony of their lives, no telephone or wireless brought news ; but suddenly the peace of the night would be broken by the sharp ring of a single horse's hooves. Sleepy heads would lift ; doors would be opened ; and as the messenger drew up in the village street the peasants would cluster round him shivering a little with cold and apprehension as to what might be his news.

The enemy out of sight, somewhere out at

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sea, no longer lying in full view of anxious citizens was good news enough, and on that Thursday night of July, 25th, Hodge and his wife went happily to sleep again ; for although life might go on much the same—up at dawn and work till dark—whether it was a Spanish King or an English Queen that rules in London, still, the Spanish King would be a change, and to Hodge's simple mind a change meant probable disaster.

### V

It was all very well in February, three months before the Armada sailed, for Philip to write to Medina Sidonia in a vein of religious uplift.

The war, he said, was a holy war, and the men must all live Christian lives and indulge in no swearing, oaths or other vices. 'No public women,' moreover, 'should embark or be suffered to approach the ships.'

But the Armada that sped across the Channel was not manned by monks or friars, but by a mongrel crew of sailors and soldiers ; fine men some of them, brave and honest, but others the mere scourgings of the slums of Lisbon, and one and all subject to ills and impatient of them. So their grumblings and

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muttered curses and occasional flarings up of unruly temper made of some of the ships small floating hells which the commanders were put to much strenuous effort to deal with.

All men must grumble now and then, and that these had cause to do so nobody can doubt. Food was not too plentiful. There was a sufficiency of biscuit, and each man received his daily measure of wine, but the lack of fresh meat and vegetables was keenly felt. Then, too, the ammunition was beginning to run short, and the idea that the English vessels would easily be captured and looted to provide new stores was beginning to wear a little thin. Writing of Frobisher in the *Ark* (not one of the fastest English vessels), an onlooker says frankly : ' The fastest vessels in the Spanish fleet as they pursued him looked as though they were at anchor.' So it hardly seemed probable that many prizes would fall to Spain.

More important than all, every man realised that hopes of an English base had had to be given up, and there was no rest anywhere, with the English, as ever, just in their rear, ready to savage any boat that dropped out of formation.

In this nerve-racking situation Santa Cruz might have found it possible to keep unim-

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paired the morale of the fleet and maintain its fighting efficiency, but the Duke who had replaced him was no leader.

He fully realised this himself, and never from the first moment of his appointment to the supreme command showed anything but a deep reluctance to accept it and genuine doubts of his own ability. The letter that he had written to his friend, Idiaquez, pointing out that he knew nothing of the sea or warfare and was incapable of taking over command, was to be proved true a hundred times over. And whether or no Philip's reason for so honouring him was due to some desire to please the Duchess' mother—for whom rumour said he had a *faiblesse*—or whether his kingly obstinacy made it impossible for him to believe that so great a noble could be a poor leader, still the fact remains that his choice of the Duke was a regrettable handicap to his Enterprise.

As the Armada sailed towards Calais, Sidonia, perturbed and flustered, was sending off letter after letter to the Duke of Parma, asking for guns and small quick boats, trying to arrange a meeting-place, expressing his frantic hopes of Parma's immediate assistance and his frantic hatred of the English fleet.

Meanwhile his enemies were enjoying a day of reasonable comfort. Howard summoned

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on board the *Ark* these officers whom he held to have especially distinguished themselves, and knighted them. His kinsmen Thomas Howard and Lord Sheffield came first, for they had undoubtedly acquitted themselves well enough for him to display quite suitably his family partiality towards them. Then came Mr. Roger Townshend, Hawkins, Fro-bisher and Captain George Beeston of the *Dreadnought*. The omission of Drake was due to the fact that Howard had no power to honour further a man already so high, and not because of any friction between them.

The atmosphere in the fleet, presumably, was genial and optimistic. This doling out of awards is always a popular pastime, and the men were in good fettle, so that when they drew near to France and heard from the captain of a Havre boat that gossip had it that the English were beaten and the Armada victorious, their laughter was hearty and unforced. Contrary rumours too were flying about. 'The English Armada has beaten the Spanish and taken twenty-two ships and sunk eighteen by gunfire,' was one of the least of these; but it was the opposite tale that provoked English merriment.

Howard too was reassured by the fact that the Guises showed no signs of hostility to him or friendship towards Spain. He had feared





SIR MARTIN FROBISHER

*(From the portrait by Cornelis Keel)*

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an alliance there, but Havre, a Guise port, was remaining perfectly neutral.

Friday morning dawned typically wet and gusty, and in the afternoon the Armada anchored near Calais and the English fleet lay quietly near by.

The weather that meant little to the tough Northerners provided real discomfort for the shivering Spaniards. There was still no news of Parma, and Sidonia's pilots were not happy to be in this, one of the most dangerous parts of the Channel.

Fear is a horrible thing. It was definitely increasing throughout the Spanish ships.

There are morbid night fears that leave the victim filled with lassitude like the onset of a disease. There is nervous strain, the consciousness of some obvious danger perhaps, that keeps a man alert and restless long after the point of exhaustion has been reached. And there are dreadful baseless apprehensions that creep in the blood and turn the bowels to water. All through that Friday night the Armada lay rocking and straining at anchor, a prey to these variable torments.

On Saturday their tremors were increased. They were constrained to watch a fine squadron of thirty-six vessels sail composedly up to join the enemy fleet.

The Channel squadron had come out to

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join the Lord Admiral. At last Seymour was to play the active rôle he coveted, though even now he came without permission from the Queen.

‘I am most glad of this most happy beginning of the victory obtained of Her Majesty’s enemies,’ he had written, when news of the first skirmish had reached him. ‘But most sorry I am so tied I cannot be an actor in the play.’

To his great pleasure, however, on Saturday morning the 27th a pinnace scudded in with orders from Howard for Seymour to come out with all his ships and join him.

The Queen had ordered him to lie off Dunkirk, and send Borough, the conventional and hidebound officer who had fallen foul of Drake, to guard the Thames with his ship the *Benavolia*, but now, though Seymour obeyed the latter part of his instructions, he disobeyed the first and merrily put out to sea to join Howard and enjoy a little active service.

He brought with him five considerable ships: his own *Rainbow*, the *Vanguard*, commanded by Sir William Winter, the *Antelope*, commanded by Sir Henry Palmer, the *Bull* and the *Tiger*, as well as some thirty smaller craft, so that on Saturday night the full naval strength of England lay in the roadstead of Calais confronting the excellency of Spain.

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On that night, too, fear gripped the Armada. It seemed as if some evil thing lay ahead. This waiting about for Parma, this enforced idleness, made men's tempers jagged and dragged on their endurance.

On Sunday as they lay there a pinnace cheekily darted out from the English fleet, shot at the royal Capitana—an insult that hurt the heart—and then, untouched, sailed nimbly back again. The Spaniards were sullen and morose. Their honour was very tender, but could they properly avenge this gaily delivered challenge?

They brooded, and as they lay there a boat came out to them from Calais bearing a message from the Duke of Parma. The Duke's face as he received it gave no indication of its content. His breeding served him well.

Presently the news went round that Parma was coming out with men and guns; all would be well; the pall of depression lifted a little and let a watery gleam of hope shine through.

But the Duke, terrified and propitiatory, was feeding his men on lies. Parma had confessed his inability to send ships or ammunition. He was blockaded by Dutch vessels. He could not embark for another full week. 'He is going to make the invasion with seventy thousand men, but now he is bringing woe

and misery on all the splendid Spanish ships. They curse him horribly, and it is to be feared he will fall into complete disfavour with the King and be recalled from the Netherlands.'

Certainly all those who knew of his defection 'cursed him horribly,' and though Sidonia's ruse had served for the moment, the day wore unhappily on.

Meanwhile Sir William Winter had paid a courtly call on Howard.

The two gentlemen were closeted together on the *Ark*, and Howard was listening to some suggestions made by Sir William.

'Why not use fire-ships?' Sir William asked.

A very good idea, Lord Howard courteously implied, forbearing to mention to his charming old colleague that he had thought of this already, and had ordered faggots, pitch and fishing-boats to make ready at Dover.

A moment later, Sir William, apt seaman as he was, had also cause to exercise forbearance, for the *Bear* coming up carelessly collided with the *Ark* and three other vessels; but such good manners obtained at this interview that most probably neither gentleman commented on the shock they must have experienced at the clumsy bruise inflicted on the *Ark* by the *Bear*. If Sir William was thrown from his chair, doubtless he concealed his embarrassment by strolling round the

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cabin, while Howard with a slight cough pursued the matter in hand.

Later, a Council of War confirmed the decision to employ fire-ships, but it was too late to sail to Dover to fetch them. Drake



THE ARMADA STATIONED AT CALAIS. FIRE-SHIPS BEING SENT OUT

*(From the engraving by John Pine)*

offered one of his ships, the *Thomas*, Hawkins another, and three others were available.

Captain Young and Captain Prouse volunteered for this hazardous undertaking, and all was made ready.

There was no moon on that Sunday night

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and the darkness was heavy with gloom for the Spanish look-out men, who were made anxious, first of all, by the dark inactivity of their enemy, and then, later, by the lights that were suddenly lit and must surely presage some hostile movement.

Their fears were justified. After midnight a steady wind was blowing in their direction, and the tide, too, was running towards them. A sudden blaze of fire lit up the English fleet, and another, and then several more, and eight fire-ships running with wind and tide made straight for them, 'spurting fire and their ordnance shooting, which was a horror to see in the night.'

The panic was overwhelming.

Sidonia ordered that cables should be cut ; and, passionately abandoned to the maxim, '*sauve qui peut*,' blind and deaf to the dictates of prudence or even commonsense, each ship crashed and bumped its way to safety out of reach of the flames whose cruelty seems the keener when they light up dark waters beneath, instead of the constant earth.

Spars went in the fierce collision, riggings were entangled, men screamed and cursed, and had hardly time to cross themselves, now that the thing they had feared without knowing its nature was actually upon them.

Demoralisation was complete throughout

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the Armada. The English operation had succeeded.

Sidonia, his passage blocked by a concourse of his own ships thrusting each other aside in frantic terror, refused to abandon the *San Martin*, and ultimately succeeded in edging her out of the jam.

The fire-ships achieved what, until that night, the English fleet had failed to do: they broke the solid defensive formation of the Armada and scattered the vessels like so many sheep abandoned to terror.

All night the galleons drifted weakly along the coast. Sidonia fired off a gun signalling the fleet to anchor, in the hopes of picking up their moorings at dawn, but those that heard shudderingly ignored his command and followed the others headlong.

At dawn on Monday a straggle of ships stretched from Calais Road nearly to Grave-lines, and Sidonia very properly cast away all thought of turning back and instead sailed off to form battle order.

The English Council of War on the previous day had agreed to attack early before the Armada had time to recover from their unhappy night. Drake was nearest the shore, with Hawkins next him, then Howard, then Frobisher and Winter with Seymour furthest out to sea.



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They sailed magnificently forward on a propitious wind, but Howard, whose maritime vision was annulled by his inexperience, seeing that the Capitana of the galleasses was in trouble, and trying vainly to get his boat into shelter close to Calais, turned aside from the main attack to fall on the rich prize.

It was not greed that urged him on. Simply, he failed completely to understand these tactical principles that Drake and Hawkins were gradually bringing into use. It seemed to him still that to assail single vessels and undermine the enemy's strength by snippets was to conduct a naval war on the recognised plan. He did not yet perceive that Drake's bold offensives were not the result of the man's personal inclinations, but of much thought and the application of his theories to the test of experience.

The galleasse, though crippled, was well enough armed to give Howard considerable trouble, and in the end Don Hugo de Moncada attained full satisfaction for his pride, in that he fell and died in conflict with no less a person than the Lord Admiral of the English fleet.

At once Howard's men swarmed aboard her, seized 22,000 golden scudi, and gutted the ship. Howard, leaving a sufficient number of men to hold the prize, sailed off to join in the general engagement, and immediately

the Governor of Calais gratified his frugal ambitions to obtain something for nothing by sending out boats to claim her since she was lying helpless in his waters.

The residue of Englishmen on board, very cheerful and uproarious, turned and rent the French boats, and the Governor, fussed and wounded in his municipal dignity, responded with a round of fire from the guns of Calais Castle ; so that the English were forced to withdraw, leaving behind the prize for which Howard had sacrificed the honour of leading the last great attack that was to be made in that campaign.

Drake had taken his place. With all the remaining squadrons he swept down on the Armada.

Sidonia, whose personal courage was unquestionable throughout this grim day, turned with the *San Marcos* and the *San Juan* in support, hoping at least to hold off the English until his pilots had drawn the scattered ships behind him away from the dangerous shallows inshore, and had re-formed the Armada into its fighting formation.

Drake passed the *San Martin* with a raking broadside, and swept on to check the movement of the enemy vessels into deep waters.

For this movement he was fiercely criticised by Frobisher, who accused him of cowardice

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and boastfulness in words that serve to betray Frobisher's unbridled jealousy of his superior. Possibly, being an explorer rather than a regular naval officer or even a practised seaman, Frobisher really felt that Drake had mysteriously deserted from the attack on the towering *San Martin* in order to enjoy himself against the smaller ships; but even this excuse is not enough to justify the fierce bitterness of his criticisms, that show that he was jealous of Drake and could not bridle his tongue.

Hawkins, who understood Drake's methods, concentrated on Sidonia and the two other big galleons, while Drake was trying furiously to prevent the rest of the enemy ships from reassuming that solid, defiant formation that had so baffled him for the last few days.

The little *Revenge*, wasting no shot now at long range, for ammunition was growing short, darted here and there where she seemed to be most needed. More than forty cannonballs passed through her, and in her rapid transits she spat out fire and venom. 'That day Sir Francis' ship was riddled with every kind of shot, and was letting fly every way from both her broadsides so that she seemed to repeat her fire as rapidly as any harquebusier.'

By nine o'clock, in spite of the *Revenge*, some

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fifty sail had got away from the dangerous Dunkirk banks and were drawn up round the *San Martin* in a half-moon, with Leyva and Oquendo at the off-shore extremity, and Recalde and Don Martin Enriquez on the port wing.

Had Howard and his squadron kept with the rest of the fleet the victory might have been won by that time, but as things were, there were many hours of bloody fighting still to be endured.

The movement of the battle was simple. The English constantly and violently threw themselves on Leyva's flank, trying to drive the Armada on to the Dunkirk and, later, the Zeeland banks, while the Armada, yielding a little here and a little there, all the time worked north into the open seas.

Since Sidonia dared not lead his ships into a full and general engagement for fear of the hopeless shallows to port, individual ships were sorely pressed. He himself in the *San Martin* was fighting well, though he was often and fiercely attacked. He earned the contempt of some of his officers for his refusal to lead an attack, but probably the whole Armada would have been brought to great straits on the sandbanks if he and Don Diego his adviser had listened to other counsel.

As it was, the Spaniards were driven slowly

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along the coast by the unrelenting fierceness of the English offensive, pressed home now by every squadron, for Howard had at last come up with the others.

The fight that day, like all open fights, was an ecstasy, an anguish, or a purge to each man according to his disposition. For Drake, who loathed the Spaniards and loved a fight, it was a day of bliss, unalloyed by considerations of the future or fear of any kind. He lived in the moment. His fine ship was under him, quiveringly responsive to his will ; his men, infected by his enjoyment, were hearty and alert, glad to live or die, as the gods might determine, in his service. England and Elizabeth were dim far-off names ; religion and patriotism were vague conceptions that had nothing to do with this business of loading and shooting off and reloading and tacking to take new aim at the rigging on an enemy galleon that was already drooping and tangled. There was time for a man to lift his forearm and wipe away the sweat that was trickling into his eyes ; time to raise a cheer as some effective shot went home ; time for a laugh and a joke. But no time to experience these noble sentiments that arm-chair fighters so often attribute to the man of action. Drake and his men and all the rest of the fleet were living from one moment to

the next. They were the men they had always been. No miraculous wartime transformation occurred to turn cowards into heroes or make of brave men brutal and ferocious beasts. Only, for each and every man, the opportunity had at last arrived to release himself in action.

Don Pedro de Valdez alone was denied this ; and his feelings as he lived through that day, a prisoner on the *Revenge* that was inflicting such fierce hurts on his ships and his countrymen, must have been very violently compounded of agony and rage.

There was no lack of pitiful incident, no lack of superlatively outstanding courage.

Drake and the Channel squadron pressed on the enemy's weather flank, with Recalde on the *Santa Anna* as usual in the thick of the fight, and at one point induced a collision between the *San Juan de Sicilia* and the Biscayan *Maria Juan*. The huge boats crashed headlong, involving some smaller vessels in destruction. The Spaniards, seeing themselves in a hopeless predicament, hurled themselves into the sea. Some, weakened by wounds, were drowned ; but, happily, many were picked up and made prisoner.

Dense clouds of smoke hung above the ships as the day wore on, so that ' the Spaniards perpetually got the powder smoke from the

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English ships in their eyes.' The Spaniards, fighting magnificently, repulsed the English attacks again and again. The *San Juan*, lightly armed and crowded with troops, made gallant efforts to grapple and board the nimble English vessels which every time eluded her and made off, and every time returned to attack from a new vantage-point.

The English guns were doing great damage. The decks of the galleons were heaped with dead and dying soldiers, and of the *Nuestro de Begona* it was said that looking in through her portholes nothing could be seen but a wash of blood that slapped against her sides as she swung on the waves.

But the Spaniards had no thought of surrender. They were retreating but they would not give in. That day, of all their ships the *San Felipe* and the *San Mateo* touched the topmost peak of heroism and endured the fiercest punishment. Don Francisco de Toledo commanded the *San Felipe*, Don Diego Pimentel the *San Mateo*. Both vessels were riddled like sieves; their sails were so many dishevelled rags; their crews decimated.

Sir William Winter, that courtly old gentleman, with the Channel squadron, had brought them low.

Towards afternoon these two and others equally battered fell a little behind, unable to

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keep up with the retreat. Don Diego's ship was settling heavily in the water, and he was making furious attempts to grapple and board the nearest English ships, when a young English officer, stirred by the sight of so much valour, leapt aloft and offered quarter to the remnant of so gallant a command if they would but surrender. A yell of derision, and a sharp clatter of musketry was the Spanish response. His body fell from the rigging and Don Diego fought on.

By three o'clock fifteen or sixteen of the most important ships including the *San Martin* had been detached from the Armada, and it seemed that not only would England inflict a crushing victory on Spain, but the prizes that would be taken would amply repay the expense of the campaign.

The climax was near, the general action was almost over, the prizes were about to be taken, when suddenly a squall blew up. It lasted only a quarter of an hour, but the English ships were forced to look to themselves, the fifteen Spanish derelict ships were gathered into the body of the Armada, and when the squall was over the English saw that the weather, which they looked on as the instrument of God's inscrutable purpose, had snatched their victims from them.

The *Maria Juan* sank in the rough seas with



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one hundred and ninety dead and wounded men on board her, and, later, the *San Mateo* and *San Felipe* were taken as prizes into Flushing, where an old story tells that the Dutchmen were so exhilarated by finding wine on the *San Felipe* that they crowded on board far more men than her scarred ribs could stand up to, and she sank in the harbour taking with her 'three hundred drinking Dutchmen.'

The battle ended with that disastrous squall. It was a fine English victory, although the fleet naturally repined at the thought of the rich reward that had been snatched from them at the last moment. But the Spaniards were driven out of the Channel; Parma could no longer join them whatever efforts he made to do so; and it looked, too, as if the whole Armada would be wrecked on the Zeeland shallows as they retreated with full sail. A strong north-west wind was blowing the ships straight on to the banks when night fell. The pilots could do nothing. Sidonia urged the ships to stay their course, but in vain: they feared the enemy more than the dangerous banks.

The Spaniards lived through another horrible night, with more obvious cause for terror than on these previous nights in Calais roadstead.

When dawn broke Sidonia found himself



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near the English fleet with a few galleons and the three broken galleasses. Always devout, he first confessed himself and then came on deck prepared to die. But the attack for which he waited was not delivered. Instead, the English withdrew and simply waited, morose and sinister, which was more distressing to Sidonia than any attack could have been. He took a sounding and found he lay in only six fathoms. The pilots still could not help. It seemed as if nothing could save the *San Martin*, and still the silent enemy watched him. He was in five fathoms now. He must surely strike. 'It was the most fearful day in the world, for all the people were now in utter despair of a happy issue and stood waiting for death.'

But the wind bloweth where it listeth and no man knoweth whence it cometh nor whither it goeth, and at the last possible moment, when it seemed that only a miracle could save the Spanish ships, a miracle was forthcoming.

The wind eased off a point, then another point; and then, freshening up, veered definitely round. A great shout burst from the throats of the Spaniards as the pilots announced that all was well, and the ships sheered gradually away from the shoals into the deep waters of the North Sea.

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It was all very well later for Elizabeth, who insisted on thinking of God as her friend and ally, to assert grandiloquently: 'God sent the wind and scattered their ships.' But any simple mariner who had served in the fleet could have told her that, oddly enough, wind and weather had sided with Spain.

The English could not yet attack the mauled and shattered fleet ahead of them. They had no ammunition, but they were full of good cheer as they sailed up the east coast in pursuit. Only Seymour was angry and jealous, for he had been detailed to return and guard the Channel.

That night Drake led the fleet again, and next day wrote contentedly home: 'We have the army of Spain before us, and mind with the grace of God to wrestle a pull with them. There was never anything pleased me better than the seeing the enemy flying with a southerly wind to the northwards. God grant you have a good eye to the Duke of Parma: for with the grace of God if we live, I doubt not, but ere it be long, so to handle the matter with the Duke of Sidonia as he shall wish himself at St. Mary Port among his orange trees.'

It was just possible that the Armada intended to attack Scotland, for it might be that if they returned to Spain with nothing

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done, a worse fate would befall them there than on hostile shores ; but, from their course, Drake deduced that they could only land at some point far north, and so his fleet made for the Forth to take in stores. They were irritated by the lack of ammunition, which they felt had prevented them from lashing out once more at their bedraggled enemy.

The wind changed on Saturday the 3rd of August, and blew strongly from the north-west, so that the Armada, Drake knew, had only two possible courses to choose. Either it would continue its lunatic flight round the perilous north coasts of Scotland and Ireland, or else retire to Denmark and presently return to the Channel to seek for Parma, who had proved himself but a broken reed. In either case the English fleet would do better to meet it in the south. Orders therefore were given to put about, and they sailed to the North Foreland.

The Queen was agitated by the cost of the whole affair and distinctly cross at the absence of prizes. Courage and fortitude were all very well : they were indeed what she expected of her subjects. Victory over the enemy whom she had secretly feared was also a comfortable achievement. Everything was quite as it should be, indeed, but there was the one very disappointing fact : that no money or

loot had resulted from the campaign. Nothing could be done, alas, to remedy that now, but at least, she thought, there was no use in keeping a pack of idle sailors eating their heads off at her expense.

She summoned Howard to Court. On August 15th he and Drake and Hawkins repaired to London. Probably she congratulated them on their exploits. Possibly they did not deeply care at that point how warm or how sincere her congratulations really were. They, and the men who had been with them, were the only persons who could judge how great the danger had been. They knew just what they had done, and they knew, too, as fighting men always know, that it would be useless to try to explain to laymen, to councillors and Queen what the last few weeks had held for them. They were joined in a close fraternity with the men who had been with them. In the war of 1914-18 men came home from the Front with little to say, until perhaps they ran up against some one from the same part of the line. Then half a sentence casually slipping out was enough to unloose a flood of reminiscence and discussion. So it was with Howard and Drake and Hawkins. With the lowest menial who had served on their ships, they had, at that moment, everything in common, but in London they felt a little

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strange, very weary, remote from the thousand minor complications that contributed to the elegant and dangerous atmosphere of Elizabeth's Court. They smiled mechanically and went through the proper motions of courtiers returning from the wars, but they were temporarily numb.

Meanwhile it was learned that the Armada was indeed in full flight round the north of Scotland and would not face the Channel again.

A virulent epidemic had broken out at the North Foreland. Less than a hundred men had died in two weeks' fighting, but now they were sinking in scores under what was probably a fatal form of typhus. The ships, too, were foul and battered. All required a thorough overhaul, and some would have to go into dry-dock.

For once the Admirals concurred in the Queen's economical suggestions, and Drake and Hawkins returned to the North Foreland to discharge their men.

The enemy was defeated : the campaign was over.

## CHAPTER V

‘Si la Armada hubiera sido bien dirigida ; hoy seria el Rey señor de Inglaterra.’

Philip of Spain.

### I

THE Duke of Medina Sidonia had still some grievous weeks ahead before he saw once more the orange trees at St. Mary Port. The last poor remnants of his self-esteem were to be plucked from him one by one until the great and princely nobleman of Spain was revealed in all his nakedness : a hopeless and incompetent failure.

His men were numbed by fatigue, privations, wounds and sickness. Their thoughts drifted vaguely towards Spain, which they hardly dared hope they would ever see again. They drank their small ration of stinking water of which little was left, and longed for the fresh grapes and vegetables and oily fish that formed their usual diet, until their parched throats began to close when they tried to eat the biscuit and dried meat served out to them, and they retched and turned away. The Armada had been richly furnished with



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12,000 pipes of fresh water, 3000 cheeses, 6500 quintals of bacon, besides rice, beans, peas, oil and vinegar. Now little was left; and 'the fleshe-meat they could not eat their drought was so great.'

But still, as they ploughed heavily northward, Recalde, Oquendo and Leyva, leaders as fine in adversity as in the heat of battle, strove to keep the ships together and cheer their dispirited crews with thoughts of the warm remedial sun of Spain.

Sidonia, unstrung, not able to face facts and always hoping for a miraculous intervention that would somehow make it possible for him to return home not too obviously vanquished, had written to Philip early in August, to say that he and the fleet were sailing home after several splendid victories. But later in the month when the victories were not confirmed, when the Armada was lost somewhere off the coast of Scotland, the more sceptical spirits in Spain laughed rudely and found vent for their nervous exacerbation in lampoons stating that the Armada was so pure and holy that it had been wafted up to heaven. Meanwhile it sailed on, past Newcastle, past Edinburgh, up to Orkney and Shetland and the inhospitable coast of the extreme north.

On August 13th all horses, mules and asses were ordered to be thrown overboard. There

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would be no triumphal progress through England with noblemen on horseback, and the meaner animals dragging the guns. There was not water even for the men, so the animals, struggling wildly, must go overboard. Those that reached the sea with whole bones blindly obeyed the instinct of self-preservation and swam as long as their strong hearts and bursting lungs would hold out. So that when dawn broke on the 14th there were still some horses swimming about, their mild eyes rolling.

Glad to leave this slaughter-house scene behind, the ships sailed on into a dense fog that would have scattered them had it not been for the brilliant organisation of Recalde and Leyva, who formed them into small groups and so kept them together.

Two Venetian vessels sank in their flight up north, but the rest of the Armada survived the stormy weather of the Hebrides which they passed at the beginning of September.

About that time they enjoyed a small piece of good fortune. The Scots would not allow them to land, but they came up with two small Scottish vessels which they seized. They stripped them of stores and water, but very civilly paid for what they took, to the surprise of the rude northerners who, in like position, would hardly have felt it necessary to open their purses.

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On September 5th the weather grew milder, and for a day or two it seemed almost reasonable to pray for a safe return to Spain, which few of them desired ever again to leave.

‘ If they may once get home again they will not meddle again with the English ’ was the spirit that prevailed on the *Santa Maria Rosa*, according to John Antonia de Monono, son of her pilot; and all the other ships were in similar case.

They had arranged in that short lull between fog and storm that every vessel must make her way to the nearest place on the coast of Spain and Portugal, and for ten days they held together, but when they arrived off the west coast of Ireland a fearful storm burst and drove them helplessly before it.

The ships, broken already by their human enemies, were in no condition to contend against the enmity of wind and water. Many of the men were ‘ so sick that they lie down ; and the residue so weak that they were not able to do any good service ; and there are daily cast overboard . . . five or six of the company.’

The storm played havoc with them. Great galleons crashed themselves to pieces on that rocky coast. The men were flung into the sea. Those who were drowned were lucky, for these others who weakly staggered through

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the shallows on to the beaches of Tyrconnel and Connaught and Munster were met by the ferociously brutal attacks of the savage Irish, and the more considered cruelty of the English soldiery who patrolled these districts.

They were knifed and bludgeoned, stripped naked, a finger cropped off here for the sake of the ring on it, a rosary torn off there from the neck of what had been a man and was now a shapeless lump of battered flesh. Then their bare bodies were left heaped up on the sand, the rotting prey of sea-birds.

A few escaped and lived for months, never for a moment out of danger. One such little band of refugees coming to a herd of cattle fell upon them and milked them, and felt new life creep through their veins as they drank the warm refreshing draughts.

One soldier 'met a seventy year old man and a beautiful girl going towards the beach to plunder.' 'I was attacked,' he writes, 'but defended myself with a pole. They took the few clothes I had and a chain of gold with 1000 reales being money owing to Medina. The girl pitied me and left me a few clothes but took my reliquary and put it on her neck.'

For seven months this man lived on stolen scraps; on the infrequent and unreliable charity of some Irish peasants. He was almost

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naked and always racked by hunger and cold, but in the end he got safely back to Spain, and probably lived for years to feed the appetite for horrors of his friends and relations.

A few others escaped. There were other Irish girls who pitied them and took them home and forgot that they were enemies ; so that even now on that coast a child is occasionally born whose dark hair and eyes and soft brown Southern skin testifies to its remote Spanish ancestry.

The Duke of Parma offered five ducats a head for Spaniards brought to him in the Netherlands. Some prisoners were accordingly taken, but few arrived at the place of payment, for the Dutch seized the ships that carried them and cut all Spanish throats.

Recalde brought his ship safely home, but Oquendo who deserved a better fate was drowned, and with him, the Prince of Ascoli, Philip's son. The young man had been with Sidonia on the *San Martin*, but had gone ashore at Calais, and in the confusion of that night when the English fire-ships routed the Armada he had come aboard Oquendo's vessel on which he remained.

Philip loved him. He was a youth of twenty-eight, a dandy, his brown hair brushed back from his white forehead. He had come on board very elegantly dressed in 'black

raised velvet with broad gold lace.' He died in the grey Irish waters wearing a doublet and breeches of white satin, with russet silk stockings. Ten gallant gentlemen besides Oquendo and the crew died with him.

Seventeen ships in all went down with noblemen, bishops, friars, sailors and soldiers on them. Most of the bullion brought to defray expenses and pay wages was on Don Hugo de Moncada's galleon and Don Pedro de Valdez' ship that Drake had taken. But there were certain chests of treasure on every big ship which must still be lying at the bottom of the sea.

The prisoners all told the same stories of agonising fatigue, hunger and misery. The stress of fear and danger had been too much. Men were not meant to endure such pains.

Meanwhile the Duke and the remaining ships sailed home, ignorant of their fellows' fate, and in early October Sidonia arrived at Santander. His galleon could not make the port, and with incredible ineptitude and a shocking disregard for decency he set off in a small boat, sending word to the King that many men were dead, the rest suffering from a contagious disease, and that he was abandoning them because he had neither the health nor the will to do anything more.

He wrote, further, that in no way whatsoever,

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and for no consideration whatsoever, would he have anything more to do with the sea, and yet he very ignobly continued to accept for many years the emoluments due to him as Captain-General of the Ocean Fleet.

Only his loyal duchess still maintained that he was misunderstood, had been asked to perform the task of Sisyphus, and left treacherously unsupported ; that he was ill and worn-out, a broken man. But her letters and protestations beat vainly on the ears of friends and courtiers. Half Spain was in mourning because the Duke had failed. His dishonour was fatally apparent and complete.

These men, too, who came home with him, and outlived him, had served under Recalde, Oquendo, Leyva and Don Pedro de Valdez, and knew what good seamanship and good leadership meant. They smiled wryly when the Duke died in 1611 and was buried in the keel of a Portuguese galleon lined with white cloth. They remembered how Miguel Oquendo had been drowned, how Recalde brought his ship and his men home to Bilbao and died two days later. They remembered Leyva's skilful organisation and de Valdez' kindness and self-sacrifice ; and the lowest man amongst them rated himself above the Duke.

The Great Enterprise had failed ; the

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instrument of God had been turned aside. The vision of Catholic supremacy must fade.

Philip received the news quietly. He was in constant pain ; pale and haggard. The hope of victory had been driving the blood through his heart for months, and now that dear hope was dead. But he remained a very proper prince. The awful news provoked no outburst of passion, no furious repinings. He listened calmly, asked but few questions, and dismissed the sad messenger. Later on that same day he consigned the sum of 50,000 scudi for the relief of the wounded and impoverished sailors and soldiers. Unable to face a meeting with Sidonia he was nevertheless able to write to him kindly, expressing sympathy for his illness and suggesting that a warm climate might speed his convalescence. And then with excellent Christian fortitude he wrote off to the Prelates of Spain exhorting them to give thanks to God for the return of part, at least, of their Armada.

Philip of Spain was a man most sensible to grief. He loved his country and he had brought her low. He hated his enemy and she had conquered him. Many men had died for him, and died uselessly. No physical torture could have touched him so nearly as these cruel and bitter thoughts. His hopes



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and his desires were all lopped off, and that he should build again at that late date the towering edifice of his ambition was not within the bounds of probability. But his kingly demeanour, his grave and tranquil decorum, were still outwardly maintained, though his soul was hopelessly adrift in the waters of humiliation and shame.

### II

Elizabeth was going mechanically through the rather less graceful motions of a victorious Queen. She was tired and very sad, for Leicester had died that autumn. Perhaps he was her lover ; perhaps, on the contrary, she was indeed Virgin as well as Queen, but certainly she had loved him for years, and she was vulnerable to his kindness or coldness as to no other man's. Essex might parade his sullenness and pettishly flout her shrewd mockery, and she only laughed and mocked him the more, or flew into a tantrum and soundly boxed his ears. But Leicester, her dear Lord Robert, was more than a mere professional charmer whose attentions ministered to her vanity. She loved him ; and when he died she wept, not from anger as was her custom, but for sorrow that she would see him no more.

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She knew, however, that Queens can afford but little time for private griefs, and there was much to be done in these autumn months.

Neither she nor the wisest of her subjects fully apprehended at first the completeness of England's triumph. To the men who had taken part in it, it seemed that they had gained only an imperfect and partial victory over these 'Ill-faced Dons.' True, the Armada had been driven back to Spain with great losses, but the English had counted on being able to sweep it right off the seas without any difficulty, and instead they had been surprised by the strength and solidity of the Spaniards' resistance. There had been grave deficiencies too in the English fleet. The commissariat had been quite inadequate; they had been crippled by lack of powder and shot, and the gunnery—in spite of Sidonia's eulogies which served to excuse his defeat—had been mediocre.

All these things must be seen to, as the Queen soberly pointed out in an exhortation to her subjects to defend their country against the invasion of enemies.

The recent campaign, she pronounced, 'hath also discovered unto us the forces and furniture of our realm. It hath showed unto us our own wants. It hath stirred up our minds to look to ourselves.' Upon which she pro-

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ceeded to comment acidly upon the wasted extravagances of some of her subjects who waste their money upon 'prodigality and excess of apparel, building and dainty fare,' instead of expending it more patriotically in order to add to the strength of the nation.

At that time too there came across from Europe a pamphlet purporting to be a true account of the war, compiled from the evidence of eye-witnesses and 'Relations and Advise come to his Majestie from the happie Fleete whereoff is Generall the Duke of Medina, in the Conquest of England.'

It stated baldly that the English had been hopelessly defeated by the might and majesty of Spain; that their ships, appalled by the Armada's strength, had taken flight and been sunk or captured, and that Drake himself was a prisoner.

The whole country was incensed by this scandalous distortion and falsification of the facts. Some riposte must be made, and so a counter pamphlet was printed in London entitled 'A Packe of Spanish Lyes, sent abroad to the World; . . . Now ripped up, unfolded, and, by just Examination, Condemned as conteyning false, corrupt and detestable wares worthy to be damned and burned . . .'

This very passionate publication was possibly written by either Drake or Raleigh, and

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is certainly on a robust note appropriate to either. But it was not answer enough. There must be celebrations to show the people of England and to convince the world that Spain was the bleeding victim, England the conqueror.

Elizabeth ordered two commemorative medals to be struck. One showed the Armada in flight and was inscribed '*Venit, Vidit, Fugit.*' The other showed the Armada routed by fire-ships and bore the inscription '*Dux Foemina Facti,*' for the Queen, like Sir William Winter, chose to believe that this very successful scheme had originated in her brain.

On November 19th, by public edict, a Service of Thanksgiving was held in every church in England with this intention: 'That the remembrance of the said benefit should upon the same day of every year to ensue, be renewed in the mind and eyes of all men throughout the whole nation, with an evident and religious acknowledgement that the common safety of them all was accomplished by the special favour of God, the Father of all good things.'

This thanksgiving was duly rendered, and on Sunday the 24th of November, three days before the thirtieth anniversary of her coronation, Elizabeth went in state to St. Paul's.

She went in her gilded coach with all the

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pomp that was dear to her. Her gown was of gorgeous purple, and she was surrounded by her courtiers, her Council, and the men who had been fighting for her.

The streets were lined from Whitehall to Ludgate with 'Assemblies of all the magistrates and companies of the city standing in a rank in the street, replenished most abundantly with people.' All was done decently and in order.

No personal considerations stirred her that day ; her thoughts were all of England. She spared none for Leicester when she swept into St. Paul's as Queen of England coming to give thanks for England's preservation.

Her country was child and husband to her. She had brought it from weakness to strength ; from blundering instability to ease and security and a place among the great nations. England was safe, and it was she who had made it safe.

She sat enthroned in the nave of the huge cathedral, and knelt and rose again ; her gown and hair bright against the cold stone. She was pleased to be there ; pleased to bask in the warmth of her subjects' happy gratitude. She could envisage no lovelier destiny than her own as Queen of England.

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My warmest thanks are due to Miss Curran, Assistant Secretary and Librarian to the Royal Historical Society, Mr. G. E. Manwaring of the London Library, and my husband Philip Rea, who have all three been of great assistance to me, and to Mr. Peter Davies for his kindness and patience.

I also wish to mention the deep gratitude that any student of the Naval History of this period must feel towards the publications of the Navy Records Society, and the careful research, wide knowledge and lucid arguments of Sir Julian Corbett and Sir John Laughton.

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